

K No 98

THE 4106
Beauty of God's House:
OR,
CONSECRATED PLACES
FOR
Religious Worship
VINDICATED.

WITH A
PATHETICAL PERSUASIVE
to all Christian People, duly
to Frequent the same.

IN A
DISCOURSE very Seasonable for these
Prophane and Luke-warm Times.

By JOHN PRINCE, V. B. P. Devon.

*Honour and Majesty are before him : Strength and Beauty
are in his Sanctuary, Psal. 96. 6.*

L O N D O N,

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To the Honourable ROGER POMEROY,
of Sandridge, in the County of De-
von, Esq;

I Expect, Sir, in this Envious, Malicious Age, (the very Dregs of time) some or other should cavil at the Title I here yield you. Let these know, you are the direct Heir of many Noble Barons in Parliament, of your Name and Family: Who, as Sir *William Dugdale* tells us (in his *Baronage of England*) were such, down to the Days of K. *Edw. I.*

What Relation those your Honourable Ancestors had, to the Parish, where these Sermons (for the most part) were preached, may be well infer'd from the Denomination it still retains unto this Day. Here from the *Norman Conquest*, had they their Castle, and their Residence; home to the Reign of K. *Edw. VI.* near upon 500 Years. How they came to be diseiz'd thereof, you can best inform the Curious herein: Only this is observable, That that Castle which so long entertain'd its ancient Lords, delighted so very little in its new Inhabitants, that (altho' rebuilt and beautified by them at the Expence of many Thousand Pounds) it never much enjoy'd it self since, and now lies buried in it own Ruins.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

But Sir, I must ingenuously acknowledge, this hath been the least of my Inducements, for prefixing so Honourable a Name to so slender a Treatise. One great Motive I must, and do confess to be this, That I may make a publick Recognition of those many Favours I have received at your hands. Courtesy and Sweetness carry their own Reward, and Applause with them: While Pride and Haughtiness (the Parent of implacable Malice and Oppression) expose the Greatest to Scorn and Hatred. But the chiefest Inducement of all is, That you and your Family, have always been great Encouragers, as well by Example as Authority (when you were Deputy-Lieutenant, and Justice of Peace for this County) of the great Duties here proposed.

What of Rudeness I hereby commit, I doubt not but your generous Disposition, will easily excuse, especially when it shall be consider'd, That this is humbly presented you, to be a lasting Testimony, to all the World, how very much I am,

Feb. 26th.
1700.

S: I: R:,

Your Obliged:

and Affectionate Friend and Servant;

JOHN PRINCE.

TIO

TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF
BERRY-POMROY,
IN THE
County of DEVON,
Health and Salvation.

My much respected Friends,

THIS following Discourse, you may remember, was mostly heretofore Preach'd to your Ears: I at this time by Printing of it, here Preach it to your Eyes; I pray God Preach it to your hearts. Now this way of Preaching, though it may want it in some, hath the Advantage of the other in this respect, That what is thus delivered, becomes most permanent and lasting. The former, like an abortive Birth, often dies in the Delivery: This like a mature one, may survive unto Old Age. So true is that of the Poet.

Vox audita perit: Sed litera scripta manebit.

Words spoken, die and prove in vain:
But written Words, will long remain.

I must

I must confess, I should not have put the Press, or you to this trouble, if these Sermons had their due effect in the Delivery: Which not happening to my Expectation, I can't tell, when thus laid before your Eyes, but by God's Blessing, they may prove happily Influential towards the Eternal Interest, both of you that did, and those that did not hear them. If there be any Expressions, throughout the whole Treatise, which may sound too harsh or severe, I here desire, they may not be interpreted, as a design'd Reflection, upon any Person, or Party, whatsoever: Only as the Emanation of my Zeal, towards God's Publick-Worship, and your Welfare.

But then, to deal faithfully with you, as becomes me, there is one thing, which hath often occasion'd great Trouble to me, and that is (notwithstanding my earnest Perswasions to the contrary) your late coming to God's Worship and Service in his House. This perhaps, may not be look'd upon as a Fault, either by your selves, or most other People, in this profane and irreligious Age; who commonly mistake in their Notion, about this Matter, and think they don't come late, or that late coming is not so great an Offence. Whereas I call that late, when you don't come to the very beginning of God's Worship and Service: For they who affectedly come after that, come too late. This is founded on good Reason, as you your selves will acknowledge, when you consider, That our Church hath so order'd the matter, that some of the most important Parts of Prayer, are placed in the very beginning of the Service. So that if you are not careful, to come soon enough, to make an humble Confession of your Sins upon your Knees, you can't expect the Benefit and Comfort of the Absolution, which immediately follows, and belongs only to such as confess and forsake them.

Besides, were there no other Inconveniences herein, this, methinks, were enough to induce civiliz'd and well bred People, to an Amendment of so ill a Practice, That by your late coming, you do not only affront Almighty God, in his own

own House, and offend the Congregation, but become guilty of great Rudeness to your Seat-Mates, who are there before you. For you often cause them to arise from their Knees, many times in Solemn Prayer, to make way for you to go to your places ; to the distracting of them, and the disturbance of the Worship of God.

Now that this Discourse may be the more useful to you, in the highest and greatest Concerns of your Souls, I here make it my earnest Request, That you would do me, nay, yourselves that right, as seriously to read it over to yourselves, and (you that have them) to your Families, once every quarter or half Year, with Seriousness and Attention. It may serve to warn you a little, if at any time you begin to cool in your Affections to the House and Publick Worship of God yourselves ; and by God's Blessing, it may enkindle a spark of Love thereunto, in theirs who for the present, have none at all. But then, this is what I give you in Charge, and make it also my Request, That you never make the Reading of this, or any other Book whatsoever, a Pretence or Excuse at any time, for your staying at home, and neglect of God's Publick Worship, as I know the manner of some is to do. No, I had rather, with that eminent Servant of Christ, Luther, (who spoke it indeed in relation to much better Books than this) that it should be burnt, than that it should be thus abus'd. You need not do so ; for you may find, on take time enough in the Evenings of the Week Days, or before you go to Church, or after you come home, on the Lord's Days, for the doing hereof ; without encroaching upon God's peculiar time. Altho' if you are at any time necessarily detain'd from the Publick Service, and have the Leisure and Ability, I shall not discourage your serious Perusal hereof, even at such times also.

And now, what I have farther to entreat of you, my dearly beloved and longed for (to salute you in the Apostle's words) is this, That you would accept of my Endeavours herein, with the

the same hearty and reciprocal Affections wherewithal, this
is tender'd to you. 'Tis the best Token I have, at this time,
to present you with; which I desire also, may ever remain a
Lasting Memorial of my earnest Care for your everlasting Happi-
ness, when I am laid in the dust and shall be no more. That
God would bless you who are my Friends, and reward your
Labour of Love, seven-fold into your Bosoms; that God
would convert those who are (so unjustly) mine Enemies, and
rebuke that Spirit of Malice and Falseness, which is gone
out into the World, is the hearty Prayer of

From my Study
in the Vicarage House
of Berry-Pomeroy, Jan. 20.
1700.

Your most Affectionate Servant,
in all Christian Offices,

J. P.

Advertisement.

There is in the Press, at Exeter, and almost quite Finish'd,
by the same Author — *Danmonii Orientales Illustres* — Or
the Worthies of Devon: A Work wherein the Lives and For-
tunes of the most Famous Divines, States-men, Sword-men, Phy-
sicians, Writers, and other Eminent Persons, Natives of that
most Noble Province; from before the Norman Conquest, down
to the present Age, are memoriz'd in an Alphabetical Order. In
which is an Account given, not only of divers most Eminent
Persons, not hitherto memoriz'd, but the Antiquity of many Fa-
milies, their Seats and Habitations, the Distances they bear from
the next great Towns, with many other things, no less Profi-
table than Pleasant.

PSAL.

P S A L. LXXXIV. Ver 1.

*How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord
of Hosts!*

People are apt to flatter themselves, with vain Imaginations, that they shall be able to answer it to God Almighty well enough, however they slight his Statutes, contemn his Ordinances, or neglect his Tabernacles; although they shall frequent them, then only, when they have no worldly Affairs, no sensual Designs, to gratifie or follow. But how vastly wide theirs is from holy David's Temper and Disposition herein, you may easily observe, from that Rapture of Affection, he breaks out into, in these Words —

How amiable are thy —

'Tis possible some of you may begin to apprehend what my Design is, in handling this Subject at this time; that 'tis to perwade Christians to a more Constant, Early, Unanimous Attendance, on the Publick Worship and Service of God, celebrated in his own House, than what formerly they were wont to make: And truly, I must acknowledge that so it is.

Q. But then some may be ready to ask, Why? To what purpose? Have not you already, and many others, with utmost Earnestness, often pressed on this Duty? And do you find, that any do frequent, or attend upon the *Ordinances* of the *Gospel*, better than they did before?

A. For Answer, I must, with much Grief and Concern, own this to be too true: But then I must tell you also, that I think my self oblig'd, to insist the oftner, and the longer, on these Necessary Points, for this very Reason, because they are so much and so generally neglected, and disregarded. To speak therefore the same things to you (that I may here apply that of the Apostle) *to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.* Which if I do, let Phil. 3. 1. none impute it to my Laziness, but their own Negligence: Unto whom I may reply in the Apostle's Words else-where —

Ye have compelled me. And I would fain know, why I should proceed,

The Beauty of God's House Displayed,

ceed, to any other Duty, before I see that you have more thoroughly Learned this in hand ? how can I hope, you will be more profited by any other *Subject*, so long as I find this pleasant and delightsome one, thus openly neglected ? Were you of the Royal *Psalmist* his Mind and Constitution, there would be nothing more sweet, nothing more desireable to you, than to go to the *House* of the *Lord*, and to wait upon God in his *Tabernacles* : Then also, would you break out, in those pathetical Words of his, — *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts !*

Here, before I proceed to the Words themselves, it may be proper enough, to speak something as to the occasion of them. Some sup-

Mol. in Loc. pose this *Psalm* was composed by *David*, at the time he was persecuted by *Saul*; and wandered up and down, having no certain abiding Place.

Others, that 'twas written, at the time, when he was vexed by *Wars* : By reason whereof, he was compelled to be often absent from the *Lord's Tabernacle*. Which Wars indeed, were troublesome and afflictive to him, upon no account so much, as for that they kept him from the *House of God*, and the *Place where his Honour dwelt*. So that he complains of this, as his greatest Misfortune, that he could not be so happy as the Sparrow or Swallow, which might make their Nests, and lay their young, near the *Altar of God*. This makes him break out into that passionate Strain, in my *Text*, like one dying away with Love and Wonder — *O how amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts !*

From which Words, I shall lay before you this *Observation*, as the Subject of my following Discourse;

Observ. That the Tabernacles of God are transcendently Amiable and Lovely. *O how amiable.*

What of *Explication*, (in respect to the *Terms* of my *Text*) or *Confirmation* (of what I have here advanced) is needful at this time, I shall lay before you, in a distinct handling of the following Particulars.

1. I shall consider, what is here spoken of ; a *Tabernacle*.
2. Whose *Tabernacle* it is ; — *Thy Tabernacle O Lord of Hosts !*
3. What is spoken of it ; That it is *Amiable*, transcendently *Amiable* ; *How amiable !*
4. To whom it is — To *David* and such as he.
5. Why and upon what account it is so. With the Dispatch whereof I shall proceed.

Lastly, To a more particular *Application* of the whole.

1. First then, I am to consider, what the *Psalmist* is here speaking of, a *Tabernacle*. The Word hath various Significations, as it is applied; but properly it imports no more than a *Booth*, or *Shed*, or *Pavilion*,

vilion, made for the present Occasion and Conveniency; either of *Boughs, or Boards, or Skins, or Cloath,* or the like. Much resembling those *Tents,* which Shepherds of old, and our *Soldiers* now, make use of in the *Field,* for a present *Shelter:* Which, as they dislodge, they are wont to remove, and carry away with them to another Place; being fastned only with *Cords* and *Stakes* down to the Earth, to which agrees that of the Prophet *Isai. 33. 20.* *Thine Eyes shall see Jerusalem, a quiet Habitation; a Tabernacle which shall not be taken down; not one of the Stakes thereof shall be remov'd, nor shall any of the Cords thereof be broken.* Where you have a short Description of a *Tabernacle,* that it was a covering for the present Necessity, staked down to the Earth, and fastened with *Cords;* this in the common Acceptation of the Word, was a *Tabernacle.*

But then, such a transient, imperfect, uncertain Place of abode as this, intended only for some *Worldly Conveniency*, we may well suppose, was not that *Tabernacle*, which *Holy David* did so long for, and was so Amiable in his Eyes. I proceed therefore to the

2. Second thing proposed, and that is to consider what *Tabernacles*, or rather whose *Tabernacle* it was, which was so *Amiable* in the Eyes of *David*; not every, not any *Tabernacle:* No, it was but one only, and that was the *Lord's—Thy Tabernacle, O Lord of Hosts.* The *Lord of Hosts* is the Title and Character, very frequently in the *Old Testament*, of the *Great God*; so denominated from those many vast *Hosts* of *Angels* and invisible Powers, which are always enroll'd, under his Command, and stand ready fixed to execute his Will. And he had a peculiar *Tabernacle*, belonging to himself, free and distinct from all others, as the *Psalmist* plainly tells us—*Thy Tabernacles—*

Now God's *Tabernacle* was the Place which he himself had appointed to be built for his Peoples more solemn Worship and Service of him: So that if you will, you may call it the *Church*, or the *Place of God's Publick Worship.* For so I find among ancient *Writers*, that the *Church* is call'd a *Tabernacle*; and the Learned *Durandus* gives this *Etymology* of it — *Ecclesia dicitur Tabernaculum q.*

Taberna Dei in qua Sacra menta Divina continentur &c. Rat. Divin.
ministrantur — for that it is, as it were, God's *Work-*
house; where, by the Administration of the Holy *Sacraments*, and other blessed Institutions of the *Gospel*, he is still graciously promoting, that great Work of Man's *Salvation*; or to intimate, that in this Place, the *Church*, Christians should be *working out their own Salvation with fear and trembling.* Or else, that in this Place, as in that *Tavern* only, where they should delight, Christians may find that true rich *Wine*, which alone can *make glad their hearts.*

There was then (we find) among the *Jews* a certain holy Structure, call'd *The Tabernacle*; for that it was made to remove up and down, from place to place, which truly best suited to the Case and Condition of God's People in the Wilderness; they being still in a moving ambulatory Posture all the while they were there. They had then no fixed *Temple* of Stone and Timber, that was to continue in one Place; for they were always journeying and travelling on, towards the promised Land, that flowed with *Milk and Honey*.

That therefore they might not be destitute of a certain, known, particular Place of Publick Religious Worship, God himself was pleased to appoint *Moses* to make him a *Tabernacle*; and we had the particular Directions that he gave about it, in the 25th and 26th Chapters of *Exod.* and says God, v. 8. and 9th of the 25. Chap. *Let them make me a Sanctuary* (so is the *Tabernacle* also called) *that I may dwell among them*; according to all that I shew thee, after the Pattern of the *Tabernacle*, and the Pattern of all the Instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

Now when this *Tabernacle* should be fitted and furnished, according to God's Direction and Intention, he promises that he will meet his People there; and that it should be *sanctified with his Glory*, *Exod.* 29. 43. There will I meet the Children of *Israel*: And the *Tabernacle* shall be sanctified by my Glory.

You see then, that the Lord of old reserved to himself a *Tabernacle*, which he call'd his own; for the more decent and reverend Ce-

*Theatr. Ter. sanctæ in Tab. 1. & 2. lebration of his Publick Worship and Service; where for Forty Years they strangely wander'd to and fro, forward and backward; as may be seen in *Adrichomius* * his Maps.

But when they came to their Journey's end, and were fixed at *Hierusalem*, then was God pleased to build himself an *House*; in which he challenged a more peculiar *Propriety*. Good *David* had it in his heart, to have built God an *House*; but for as much as he had been a Man of War, and had shed Blood, God would not accept of an *House*, made with such hands; but says he, *Solomon* (the Peaceable, as the Word imports) *He shall build an House for my Name*, 1 Chron. 22. 9. 10. *For my Name*, i. e. for the Honour of God's Name; or rather, that shall be called after God's Name; that is, *God's House*; was the *Temple* at *Hierusalem*, distinguish'd by the Title of *God's House*; and the *Temple of the Lord*, in divers Places of the *Holy Scriptures*, too many at present to be repeated. And we find in the 56. Isa. 7. how the Lord challenges a Right and Property therein unto himself; in these remarkable Words, *Even them will I bring to my holy Mountain; and make them joyful in my House of Prayer*. And although

although our Blessed Saviour had not reserved to himself an House upon Earth, where to lay his Head, as he was Man, yet he earnestly asserted his Right to the *Temple*, as he was God; and with great Zeal purged it from the Abuses and Profanations of the Jews and others; and would have it to be kept sacred, as knowing the Original Design thereof; and unto whom it did peculiarly belong. God hath then a *true and indefeasible Right* in those *Houses*, dedicated to his Name, and set apart for his Service. As the *Psalmist* likewise positively asserts it in my Text, — *Thy Tabernacles, O Lord!* —

You see then, that tho' the great God is not confin'd to *Temples* made with Hands, yet is he pleased to accept of *Temples* made with Hands, and duely dedicated to his peculiar Honour and Worship. And we may well conclude, that the Service and Devotion, paid him in his own House, is much more acceptable to him than it would be elsewhere. And we may greatly fear, if for no other Reason, he may justly refuse it, when it shall be offered him in base and vile Places, without any Necessity obliging thereunto. 'Tis a remarkable *Observation* that which *Durandus* tell us, * he had from *Burchardus*, that the Jews were always wont to pay * *Quo supra.* their Sacrifices to the Lord, in Places consecrated to his Name. — *Nec in aliis quam Deo dedicatis locis, munera Domino offerebant.* Nor did they make their Offerings and Oblations in any other than in Places dedicated to God.

Now this *Dedication* of Places and Houses of Religious Worship, hath been always done in very solemn manner. Even Almighty God himself commanded *Moses* that he should make an anointing Oyl or *Chrism*, and therewith anoint the *Tabernacle* and the *Ark* of the *Covenant* in the *Dedication* thereof. Whereby you see, it was not consecrated only by Prayers and Sacrifices, but by the anointing with Oyl also; and that by God's express Command. Which Rite hath been also practised in the *Consecration* of *Christian Churches*; as may be seen more largely, with the manner and reason thereof, in the last quoted *Author*.

Nor was every *meer Priest or Presbyter* allowed as sufficient, among the Primitive Christians, for the *Consecration of Churches*: But that Office belong'd only to the *Bishop*, as the more express Representative of Christ (*the great Bishop of our Souls*) who alone doth dedicate us, and our Performances, to the Acceptation of God. Which was held a Matter of that Consequence + *Durand.* in the Church of Christ, that the *Council of Carthage* quo prius. did forbid a *Priest* to undertake such an Affair, as + *Durandus* tells us.

That such solemn Consecration of Churches, was anciently practis'd, we have an eminent Example for it in that first *Christian Emperor*

perour Constantine the Great ; who having finished an House for the Service of God at *Hierusalem*, assembled the greatest part of the Bishops of Christendom, for the Consecration thereof. Which thing

* Vit. Constant. l. 4. c.
41, 43, 45. Lat. Edit. Bas.
A. 1587. p. 174, 175. Vid.
Sozom. Hist. Eccl. Lib. 2.
Cap. 25.

they did at his Request, some with Prayer, some with Sermons, some with Orations, as may be seen in *Eusebius* and others. And an House thus consecrated was held among Christians the most acceptable for God's Publick Service.

To what a pitch of Profaneness

then, are many in the present Age and Nation grown, who think all Places for Religious Worship, to be alike and equally Amiable ? That a *Stable* or a *Barn* is as Holy and Good, as a consecrated *Church* ? You may hence be convinced of your Errour and Mistake. God hath in all Ages of his Church, reserv'd to himself some peculiar Place above others, for his more solemn Publick Worship and Service. Which we may justly conclude, is more acceptable to him than any other, especially than any such as hath been destinat'd to vile and mean Imployments and Uses.

'Tis true, in time of a raging Persecution, when the Primitive Christians, were denied the use of their Churches and Temples, they did serve and worship God as they could ; in Caves, Grotto's, and Subterranean Vaults. And we need not question, but these their Services were acceptable to him, tho' offered up in unconfecrated Places. But now, when the Temple Doors are set wide open, for the Professors of the Truth, as laid down in the Gospel, to repair unto ; and no one is excluded thence, but they who wilfully shut out themselves, for People in such a juncture to neglect God's House, and creep into unhallowed Places, can we think this Practice commendable or becoming Christians ? Holy David here, look'd upon the Tabernacle as amiable, (we may well conclude) because it was the Lords, and he had a special Right therein. *Thy Tabernacles* --- And this hath led me on to the

3. Third thing proposed, and that is to consider, what is here spoken of God's Tabernacle, that 'tis Amiable ! Nay, *transcendently Amiable*.

1. First, That 'tis Amiable. The Word signifies Lovely, Beautiful, or Desirable. This indeed was true, in a literal Signification of the Word. For a Structure made and adorn'd, according to the Direction God himself was pleased to give about it, with Gold, and Sil-

ver, and Blue, and Purple, and Precious Stones, as may
† Chap. 25, 26. be seen at large in the Book of *Exodus* aforequoted,

† must needs be *materially*, very beautiful and lovely.

Upon your careful Perusal whereof, you may observe, that God loves

to have his *Tabernacle*, the Place of his *Publick Worship and Service*, to be made and kept very *decent and comely*.

Some there have been, even among those who would be thought Christians of the highest *Form*, of so sordid and impious Disposition, as to think any *Cost*, or rich *Ornaments*, bestowed upon God's *House*, to be lost and thrown away. Nay, some have *sacrilegiously* taken away from it those *Utensils* and *Adornations*, which the Piety of some good devout People have heretofore decked and beautified it with. Whereas when God was pleased to erect his *Tabernacle*, he required that every one should bring, according to their Ability and Degree, towards the adorning as well as raising of it. Some, that could, were to bring Gold, Silver, Brass, Blue, Purple, and fine Linnen: Others, who had no better, were to bring Goats-hair, Rams-skins dyed Red, and Badgers skins, and Shittim-wood; as you may see in the 25. *Exod.* 3, 4, 5, v. All which duely put together by a curious *Artificer*, would make a very Beautiful and Glorious *Fabrick*.

Q: Ay! But *Quorsum hæc?* may some say; why all this *Waste*?

A. The very Question of *Judas* himself, * when he saw *Mary Magdalen* to take a Pound of Ointment of *Spikenard*, very costly, and anoint the Feet of *Jesus*. He begrudged it, and thought 'twas all thrown away. What, as if he had said, means the Woman, thus to throw away Ointment of so much Value, which might be sold for several *bundred* Pence? Yet we see our Blessed *Saviour* was well pleased therewith; and promises, that the Fame of her Piety shall reach so far and wide, as the *Gospel* it self. *Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached, in the whole World, there shall also this that this Woman hath done, be told for a Memorial of her,* Mat. 26. 13.

* St. Mat. 26.
8. compared
with Joh. 12.4.

Thus some also, very great *Zealots* in our late *Civil Wars*, † could delight in demolishing of *Churches*, in defacing the *Ornaments*, and spoiling or taking away those things of Value, in Plate, Vestments, and the like; which the Piety of former Ages had enriched them with. I pray God always to keep his *Churches* (I mean such as have any thing to lose) from such profane, avaritious *Reformers* as these.

† Merc. Ru-
stic.

Who might too well be compared to *Dionysius the Tyrant*, that robb'd *Apollo* of his *Cloak and Beard of Gold*; for that it was too hot, he said, for the *Summer*, and too cold for the *Winter*. ||

|| Æstate grave, hyeme
frigidum. Eral. Apoth. l. 5.
in Dionys.

Julian (as I take it, it was) took away the *Golden Plate* from the Christian Altars, appointed for the Administration of the Lord's Supper: And in the room thereof, left a *wooden Dish* and a profane *Reflection* upon our *Saviour*; indeed too profane to be repeated.

Some

Some likewise, in the last Age, among our selves, defaced the Places consecrated to God's Publick Service; and out of a ^{* As at Ch.} blind Zeal, thinking all Pictures to be *Idols*, broke and Ch. Oxon. spoil'd the *History* of the Holy Scriptures, curiously painted in some *Glass Windows*, ^{*} which can't now be recovered at any Price.

The House of God then, the Place of his Publick Worship, here call'd his *Tabernacle*, is *Amiable* and *Lovely*. 'Twas materially true among the *Jews*, both in respect of this *Tabernacle* God appointed in the Wilderness, and that most Glorious *Temple* he erected in *Hierusalem*. Of which last take this brief Account, That this *Temple* was fairly built, and artificially contriv'd, of white Marble Stones, which were so well conjoyn'd, that a Man could not perceive the Junctures [†]. The inner Walls were all covered over with Cedar-wood, carv'd with Flowers of divers kinds, gilt all over with pure Gold, and set with precious Stones. Insomuch that all the Parts of the upper Roof within the ^{|| Joseph. Antiq. Jud. l. 8. c. 2.} *Temple*, did shine with the Lustre of it ^{||}. The Pavement thereof, also was plated all over with fine Gold; so that all the *Temple* within, both above, under foot, and on every side, was gilded clean over. Much more of its wonderful Lustre and Glory may be seen by the Curious in the *Jewish Historian*.

Q. But what is all this to us, may some Christians say? Was not this extraordinary Glory of the *Temple* at *Hierusalem*, only Typical of Heaven, and the Glories unexpressible of the *Celestial Canaan*? For Answer

A. True: But what then? Are not our Christian *Churches* in some Measure expressive of the same? And doth not the Nobleness of the Palace declare the Majesty and Grandeur of the Prince? This we may suppose was the reason, why Christian Kings and Emperours heretofore not only *endowed*, but excellently *adorn'd* those *Churches* which they builded. 'Tis considerable, when that most Christian Emperour Constantine the 1st, determined to raise a *Temple* unto God at *Jerusalem*, in the Place of the Holy *Sepulchre*, he gave Command to the Magistrates, — *ut illud opus magnifice imprimis & splendide fabricandum curarent* — that they should take

^{* Sozom. Hist. Ec. l. 2. c. 1.}

^{† Hist. Eccl. l. 1. Epist. ad mac.}

Care it should be builded stately and magnificently *. So he did also to *Macarius Bishop* of *Jerusalem*, that the Walls of the *Sanctuary* should be made of Stone polished with exquisite Artifice; and the inside thereof should be set forth to the greatest Lustre by Marble Pillars, as *Socrates* testifies of him [†]. Thus noble and magnificent

magnificent was the *Emperour Justinian* also, when he erected to the Worship and Service of Jesus Christ, that most splendid Temple at *Constantinople*, call'd *Sancta Sophia* (now in the hands of the most cruel Enemy to the Cross of Christ the *Turk*) which the Historian calls — *Eximum ædificium** — That surpassing Edifice; of which he gives this farther Account — *Quod quidem tale fuit, quale non aliquando, visum fuisset. Quodq; Ornatu & splendore, adeo excelluit, uti nulla dicendi vi facile explanari posset* — Such an one, as the like is but rarely seen: Which did so excel in Beauty and Splendour, that it could not easily be expressed by the most eloquent *Orator*.

* *Evag. Hist. Ec. I. 4. cap. 30.*

Constantine the Good, as well as Great, thought he could not sufficiently enrich, and adorn the House of God he had raised to him. — *Quanta in ipso Templo donorum Turba, ex auro, argento, precioso Lapide,* — He bestowed so much Gold, Silver, and precious Stones upon it, that *Eusebius* himself tells us, † he had written a Book of it, and dedicated it to that *Emperour*.

† *In vit. Constant. I. 4. cap. 46.*

Nay, not the Christians alone, but even *Infidels* and *Heathens* have been and are, not only neat and curious but also generous and noble in their *Temples* and Places dedicated to their Gods. And we are told expressly of the *Turks* ‡, that they are very magnificent in their *Moschs*, and || Sir Paul Ricaut Present Edifices erected to the Honour and Service of State of the Ottom. Emp. l. 2. c. 7. p. 213. God; not only in the Buildings, but in the Endowments of them; with so large Benevolences, that as some compute, one third of the Lands of the whole Empire, are allotted and set out to a *Holy Use*. Much to the shame of those (as the same Author says) who pretend to the Name of Christians, and yet judge the smallest Proportion to be too large a Competence for those who serve at the *Altar*.

So very tender and curious also are some even of the *Heathen*, of the Honour and Reverence of their *Temples*, that they won't spit in them; nor suffer Dog, no, nor Man who is not of their own Religion, to come into them.

Why Christians then in this Age of the Church, should not also be very curious and magnificent in keeping and adorning their *Consecrated Churches*, and Places appointed for the Worship and Service of the true God, and his Son Jesus Christ, I can see no reason. And indeed, when People can let God's House be neglected, foul and filthy, this far from expressing either any due Awe or Reverence they have for God, or any true Love or Respect unto his Service. No, the Filthiness, the Sordidness of the Place, seems an Indication of the

Profaneness of the Worshippers, as if some *Bull*, or *Crocodile*, or other *Egyptian Beast*, were the God that is worshipped there. Or as if they thought any thing were good enough for God,
* 2 Sam. 24. 24. and his Service; whereas we ought to worship him, not with that which costs us nothing *, but the very best of all we have.

Secondly, This *Tabernacle* the Prophet had Relation to was not only lovely, but *transcendently lovely*: For 'tis not said only *Amiable*, but *how Amiable*, which is spoken as it were by way of Wonder, and pathetical Exclamation, as the Critic † notes upon the place. This Interrogation is a Figure in *Rhetorick*, that highly advances and intends the Affirmation. *How amiable!* — 'tis as if he had said, who is able to express. I challenge any to declare the superlative Excellency and Loveliness of God's House.

We ought not then to look upon the Place of God's true, reform'd, Publick Worship, to be amiable only in a low degree or measure (tho' where are they among us that do so much as this?) but that 'tis incomparably so, in the highest and to the last degree. *O how Amiable!* And this leads me on unto the

4. Fourth General proposed, and that is to consider unto whom the *Tabernacle* of God is so very, so transcendently Amiable.

Q. What! Is it so to every one? Are all People so affected with it? Do all take up such a good Opinion of it? May some say.

A. We may answer, alas! no. The more's the pity, there are but few, very few that do so. The matter therefore must be accommodated, by distinguishing, that as the World consists but of two sorts of Persons, the Good and the Bad, the Righteous and the Wicked, so the Church visible upon Earth, consisteth of two sorts likewise, *Hypocrites* and *sincere Christians*; *Worldly Professors*, and *Zealous Practisers*.

1. *First*, For worldly, loose, carnal People (however they pretend to the Name of Christians yet) we know and find by Experience, that they don't see, they don't apprehend any such Loveliness or Beauty in God's *Tabernacle*, the Place of his Publick Worship and Service. If they did, they would certainly love it, and frequent it, much more and much better than they do. We desire, we endeavour nothing more, than to be in the Place or the Company which we truly love, and is Amiable in our Eyes. The House of God is Lovely, is Amiable, tho' Worldly People don't discern it, and are not duly affected with it.

2. But then *Secondly*, Tho' it be not so to the Carnal Worldly Professor, yet to the truly Righteous Sincere Christian, God's Tabernacle

† Pol. Syn.
Critic. in Psal.
84.

nacle is highly lovely : It was so to *David*, and it is so to such as he. 'Twas in no Complement, but from the Sincerity of his heart, that he here breaks out into these Words of Admiration — *How amiable are thy* — as we may well infer from hence, that we find him at the same strain elsewhere, *Ps. 24. 4.* One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of my Life, *to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple.*

Nor was this the Disposition of good *David* only, but of all God's faithful People and Servants, throughout all Ages of the Church. The Temple of God, the Place where he recorded his Name, hath been their great Delight and Comfort: They could be content to dwell nigh it, to be always in it. As it is recorded of *Anna*, tho' a Widow, Fourscore and Four Years old, yet she departed not from the *Temple*, but served God with Fastings and Prayers Night and Day, *Luk. 2. 37.* What a Love had this good Old Woman to God's House? How was she taken up with the Beauty of it, that she could be contented to be in it Day and Night? Not that we are to suppose, that she lived in the *Temple*, and spent her whole time there; but that she was constantly at the *Morning* and *Evening Sacrifice* there celebrated; at the *Holy Prayers* there offered up; at the Interpretation of the *Sacred Scriptures* there made. For among the *Jews* were three Places of *Publick Worship* ||, their *περιτύλιον*, or Place of Prayer, wherein they prayed only; ||Weems Christ. their *Synagogues*, wherein they prayed and interpreted Synag. I. i c. 6. the *Scriptures*; And the *Temple* in which they prayed, Sect. 2. § 3. interpreted the *Scriptures* and sacrificed. Of which last Place this pious Widow was a constant *Devotee*. So the Learned interpret it, — *Non ex hoc intelligatur semper in Templo residere, sed quod crebro frequentabat* *. * Stella in Locum. p. 79.

Nor was this the Observation only of the good People of old, but we know it hath been the continued Practice of all that truly love and fear God, even home unto this Day. They make Conscience of waiting on God in his House, according to his Command and their Duty: And there's nothing they more delight in, or desire.

Yet the Number of those, in the present Age, is so very small, that I may well break-out, O! where is a Person of such a Frame, of such a Temper to be found among us? There's nothing generally (like wayward and wanton Children) that People more loath and nauseate, than the Spiritual Food of their Souls, and the Place it is dispensed in. I have seriously thought, if God Almighty should promise to spare this Place from Destruction, as sometime he did *Sodom*, if there were but Ten Righteous People found therein, i. e. but Ten that do come

early, duely, constantly, and out of a *Principle of Conscience* to God's House, and God's Ordinances, I tremble to think what would become of it. Nay, 'tis much to be feared, a far smaller Number thus qualified, would not easily be found. A sad Demonstration of the great Decay of Piety and Religion. When I see any one Person, Man or Woman, who make it his Busines to come timely, and constantly, and devoutly to the House of God, then (and not before) shall I begin to think the Tabernacle of God is truly Amiable in his Eyes.

Yet, however their Number is but rare, and of late grown to be remarkably so to the Righteous, such as truly fear God, his House and his Ordinances are sweet and pleasent. There's nothing in this World they love or value in comparison of them.

Q. If any should enquire into the ground or occasion hereof?

A. I shall answer briefly in a word or two only ; that I may not seem to anticipate my self as to the 5th General proposed.

1. It may be resolved into good Peoples *accustoming* themselves from their Youth up, unto a diligent frequenting of God's House and Ordinances. Intimacy and Familiarity, prudently manag'd, breeds Love and begets Esteem, both as to things and Places, as well as Persons. How are most wont to be extraordinarily affected unto those places they have long lived, and in which they have much convers'd ? They who from their Youth or Infancy (by their pious Relations) have been trained up to a constant Attendance upon God's House and Ordinances, take a Delight and Pleasure in them. 'Tis more Comfort and Satisfaction to them to go to the Church, than it is to a worldly Person to go to a Feast or a Playhouse. Would you then know, why these things are no more Amiable in your Eyes? 'Tis very much, from this, that you were never train'd up in them, nor accustomed to them. Practice renders every thing easy ; that becomes a Delight to such as are accustomed thereto, which seems hard or impossible to those, who never tryed it before : But then

2. *Secondly*, This Love they have to God's *Tabernacle*, ought especially to be attributed to the Grace of God's Holy Spirit, working in and upon the Souls and Consciences of the Righteous. By Nature all spiritual things are bitter and insipid to our Taste ; we find no gust or relish in them ; they are dry and unpallatable, and we have no Appetite towards them. We are like a Person sick of the *Faundise*, have not only little or no Stomach to these things, but our Distemper turns them into an ungrateful Relish. But they who are enlighten'd by the Grace of God, the Eye of whose Soul is open'd and clear'd from the Clouds and Mists of Sin, by the Rays and Beams of the Holy Spirit, they discern an enravishing Beauty, an attractive Amiables

bleness in the Tabernacles of God : So that they seem to desire nothing more, nothing so much, nothing else, than to be therein. This we must resolve into the peculiar Blessing of Almighty God in opening their Eyes, without which they could never do it. For if there be ever so curious or lovely an Object in the room, yet so long as a Man's Eyes are shut he can't discover or discern it. But when, with St. Paul, the scales fall off his Eyes, he then sees and admires at the Beauty and Loveliness of that House, and of those Ordinances, which he before despised or neglected. So much for the 4th General Head proposed.

5. *Fifthly*, I come next to enquire why, and upon what account, the *Tabernacle* of God (call'd in my Text *Tabernacles*, not for that there were more than one God's Institution among the Jews, but from the several *parts* thereof *) should be so exceeding Amiable and Lovely. There may several weighty Ar- * Poles Crit. in Loc.

guments or Reasons be assigned for it.

1. For the *Unity* and *Uniformity* thereof. *Uniformity* is *Lovely*: 'tis what greatly commends the Beauty of any material House or Building. If it be not some way *uniform* and proportionable, 'tis an *heap* rather than an *Edifice*, and it may be call'd a *Babel*, but not a Church. What greatly commends also the Amiability of God's House, is the *Uniformity* thereof. I don't mean so much, in the outward Structure, though this be desireable: And 'tis what we see our *Fore-Fathers* were careful of, that the Frame of our Churches should be uniform; to represent (we might think) that more desireable *Uniformity* there ought to be within among those that frequent them.

But the *Uniformity* which is so Amiable, is spiritual and internal; when pious good People, who profess to worship the only true, one God, are content to do it with one Lip, and one Tongue, and one Heart. The *Unity* and *Uniformity* thereof, was what greatly commended the Beauty of the City *Jerusalem*, which ought chiefly to be understood in a *Mystical* Sence and Meaning. *Jerusalem*, says the Royal Pen-man, *is built as a City that is compact together*, Ps. 122.

3. The old Translation in our *Common-Prayer-Book*, reads it thus; *Jerusalem is built as a City, that is at Unity in it self.*

That would be a deplorable Sight indeed, to see a City distracted and divided within it self. Such a sad Object the same City, by the just Vengeance of Almighty God, yielded, when in the Siege of Titus *Vespasianus* the *Roman Emperor*, it was expos'd to Destruction meerly by the *Seditious* that were therein. For by their Desperation and Obstinacy, faith their own *Historian* †, the whole Nation was extinguished.

† Joseph. de Bel. Jud. Lib. 5. cap. 16.

But a blessed sight it is, to see a City, and especially the House and Church of God, mystical *Jerusalem*, at Unity in it self ; of one Heart, and one Mind, especially in Religion and the best things. Behold, how good and pleasant it is, says David, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity ? *Psal. 133. 1.* where Unity is found among Brethren, Brethren in Religion, in Profession, that is a lovely sight, a pleasant Object indeed.

Such is the true Tabernacle of God ; there is *Unity*, and so far as possible, *Uniformity* too. For indeed, what Unity can be pretended in Variety, where Division and Separation is found, where one faith *I am of Paul*, another, *I am of Apollos*, a third, *I am of Cephas*? Is this what makes the Tabernacle of God so Amiable? Far from it. There is but one God, and one Christ, and one Baptism, and one Faith, and one Hope of our Calling, *Eph. 4. 5, 6.* How ought we then to endeavour to keep the *Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*? Truth is but one, and 'tis uniform too ; that can't be different; for then it must divide from it self.

I must openly own, I am not for *Persecuting* or *Prosecuting* any, that differ from me in Matters of Religion, from a pure Principle of Conscience. I should think it hard Measure to be served so my self ; — *Et quod tibi fieri non vis alteri ne feceris* — is a Rule to me. You know whose Words they are, Do as you would be done to, and what Stress is hung upon them by our Saviour, no less than that of the Law and the Prophets, as you see, *Mat. 7. 12.*

'Tis true, all sober sincerely Conscientious Christians do, and ought to manage their *Doubts* and *Scruples* so, as that they shall give the least Offence possible to others ; especially to their Superiors, whether in Church or State. But alas! the Separation among our selves seems of another kind ; not to be grounded (generally speaking) upon a Principle of meer *Conscience* (tho' that is pretended) but upon (what I am loath to speak of Professors of Religion) upon *Ambition* and *Emulation*. The Contest held with the *Church* seems to be this, not who shall serve God best and most faithfully (that were a good *Emulation*) but who shall *Govern*; who shall *Command*; who shall be *Uppermost*. This is plainly the bottom and ground of those Dissentions and Separations, which have harraf'd and perplex'd the Established *Church of England*, for a whole *Century* of Years last past.

But to pass by these things, the Beauty of God's Tabernacle is *Unity* and *Uniformity* : His People go up thither to serve him with one Heart, and with one Voice. And this is a most lovely Sight ; whereof we may say with *David*, O ! how Amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord —

2. Secondly, The Tabernacle of God is Amiable to the Righteous upon the Account of that truly profitable Entertainment they find there. A desolate Wilderness, the wild Desarts of Arabia, are no way Amiable or Desireable: They afford no Accommodation, they yield no good Entertainment, whereby we can in the least be advantaged. This is what renders a Place desirable: And when it is short hereof, we neither much admire or commend it.

'Tis true, the profane Daughters of *Jerusalem* may cry out to the Spouse of Christ, in those scornful Words, *What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, O thou fairest among Women! What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, that thou dost thus charge us;* Cant. 5. 9. so many are ready to say, what is the Tabernacle of God better than another Tabernacle? What is the Church better than any other House? Like *Naaman the Syrian*, when the Prophet bid him go wash seven times in *Jordan* and then he should be clean, breaks out into this contemptuous Expression, Are not *Abana* and *Pharpar*, Rivers of *Damascus*, better than all the Waters of *Israel*? And so went away in a Pett.

'Tis true, if Persons mind nothing but Sensuality, and the gratifying of what the *Heathen* call'd the *Beast of a Man*, the Body and natural Appetite, then indeed here can no such Gratification be found. But we hope none approach this sacred Place only to please the outward Sences; not the Eye in any Material Object; not the Ear by any harmonious Sounds, or Cadency of Utterance; if they so do, no Wonder they go off greatly disappointed: For that is neither endeavour'd, nor design'd in this Place. But the Entertainment all good Christians do, and ought to expect here, is only what is Divine and Spiritual. Which to them is far more affective and impressive (as well as profitable) than any sensual or carnal one can be.

Now the *Particulars* of this so advantagious Entertainment, the People of God meet with in his House, are such as these, *Prayers*, *Sermons*, and *Sacraments*. All which in their *kind* rightly discharg'd, are highly profitable.

1. *Prayer*, *Publick Prayer*, which hath a peculiar Promise made unto it; where *two or three are met together in my Name*, there am I in the midst of them *: and *what two of you shall agree in, to pray for upon Earth, shall be granted in Heaven*. Who is able to describe the innumerable Benefits, and almost Omnipotent Power of *Prayer*? How hath it sealed up, and unseal'd the Heavens? How hath it stopp'd the Mouths of Lyons? How hath it opened Prison-Doors? What han't it done? What can't it do? A Duty so acceptable to God, and so profitable to our selves that we can't be better employed than in *Publick*

* Mat. 18. 20.

† Ver. 19.

Publick Celebration of it. God himself is so pleased with it, will have it so frequently repeated in his Temple, that of all other, the weighty Duties of Religion, he hath denominated his House from that of *Prayer* — *My House shall be called the House of Prayer*, not the *House of Hearing*, not the *House of Preaching*, but the *House of Praying*. Which may render it very strange, how a Duty of such Consequence, of such Advantage to our selves, of such Acceptation with God, should come to be so greatly neglected, if not despised, among such as yet would be thought *Christians*. This undoubtedly was one of those Duties performed in God's *Tabernacle*, that render'd it so very amiable in *David's Eyes*: And which still renders the House of God desirable in the Eyes of all true *Christians*.

2. Another truly Profitable Ordinance administred in God's *Tabernacle*, which speaks it so Amiable, is that of *Hearing the Word of God*. A Duty no less to be esteemed and attended on, than any other; which should be done indeed with great Zeal, and with great Reverence.

Tho' some in a Parish (whose Parts and Accomplishments are better than ordinary) may know as much, it may be more, in some nice speculative Points in Divinity it self, than the Preacher appointed to be over them doth, yet ought they, while he preacheth the Word of God, duly to attend his Doctrine; not only to be a good Example to others, but in respect to the *Ordinance* of God. Because (saith St. Paul in remarkable Words) *it pleaseth God, by the Foolishness of Preaching, to save such as believe*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. However to the *Sophi*, the wise *Philosophers* and conceited *Opiniastres* of the World, the *Gospel Preach'd*, may seem weak, foolish, or vain, yet they are to know, 'tis the *Institution* of infinite Wisdom; and what is more, 'tis — *δύναμις θεος εἰς σωτηρίαν* — as the Apostle calls it, *'Tis the Power of God to Salvation, to all that Believe*, Rom. 1. 16. By which Power of God (which nothing is able to resist) this Contemptible Ordinance Preaching, (as 'tas been held) hath born down before it, all the Wisdom and Philosophy in the World, in its greatest height and Glory. For that the Word of God was there read, and the Statutes of God were there expounded, therefore the *Tabernacle* became so Amiable in the Eyes of *David*: And the same Reason renders our *Churches* so too, in the sight of all good Christian People.

Lastly, Other *Ordinances* celebrated in our Christian *Tabernacles*, are the *Holy Sacraments*; which are two, *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*; the first is an initiating Institution, we are hereby admitted into the Church of Christ, and become Members thereof; and the other is a confirming and corroborating *Ordinance*; which serves to seal

seal up to the worthy Receiver an undoubted Right to a free Pardon of his Sins, and an Eternal Inheritance among the Saints in Glory.

Which Holy Sacraments appointed by our Saviour to be administered in his *House*, ought be attended on with great Zeal and Reverence. And we are to know, that neither of them was designed to qualify Men to any secular Preferments. If any receive them so (as 'tis notoriously known some do) they abuse them and receive them unworthily; and become guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ; which, without Repentance, will bring Damnation.

Now this is a Privilege, especially the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, *David* himself could not partake of, in the *Jewish Tabernacle*. Could he have gone thither, and fed upon the *Body* and *Blood of Christ*, *verily* and *indeed* there, as Believers now do in Christian-Churches (I mean in a Spiritual Sence) How much more dear and Amiable (if possible) would it have been in the Royal Prophet's Eyes?

These are (all of them) the wise Institutions of infinite Goodness and Mercy; gracious Methods and Instruments for the bringing us to Salvation, which are here made use of. Which if duly consider'd, how amiable would they render God's House unto us!

3. Thirdly and lastly, The Tabernacle of God is farther Amiable to the Righteous, upon the account of the *Pleasure* that is there found. Now Pleasure is very inviting, very attractive: And that is commonly lovely in our Eyes, that will afford us Pleasure and Delight.

Obj. But against this, I expect some should *Object*.

Pleasure, do you say? What *Pleasure*? We taste, we feel no *Pleasure* at all therein. For Answer,

Answ. Nor does the full Soul relish any Sweetness in the Honey-Comb; nor is the *Aff*s pleased with the most melodious Sounds; (hence the Proverb, *Asinus ad Lyram*) nor is the *Swine* delighted in the most fragrant Perfumes; nor *Owls*, nor *Moles*, with the Sun-Beams. However, there's Sweetness in Honey, there's Melody in Musick, there's Refreshment in Odours, and there's Comfort in the Rays of the Sun; tho' *Swine*, and *Owls*, and *Asses* are not affected with them. So is there in the *House of God*, and those gracious Ordinances there celebrated, tho' wicked and sensual Men don't feel it. *They who by reason of use*, as the Apostle expresses it, *have their Sences exercised, to discern between good and evil*, Heb. 5. 14. they are ready to own and acknowledge, there is no Pleasure, no Delight, like what they find, and meet with, in the Tabernacle or House of God.

I shall here therefore, in my farther enforcing of this Argument, propose to your Considerations two things.

1. *First*, What kind of Pleasure it is the Righteous find in God's House, that doth so affect their Hearts with the Amiableness of it. And,

2. *Secondly*, What is the true ground and reason of this Pleasure, which doth so affect them.

1. *First*, The Pleasure which the People of God meet with in his House, is no Bodily sensual Pleasure, but what is much better and greater a Divine and Spiritual Pleasure. It does not indeed affect our Bodies; we mistake if we think to gratify them there; but it touches our Minds and Souls, *our noblest part*. And this is what People ought to consider in their going to the House of God, that they go thither not to indulge the Body (tho' many by their drowsy lazy Postures, seem to intimate they come for little else) but to feed their Souls with the *Bread of Eternal Life*. So that the Pleasure they are to expect there, is of a far more pure refined Nature, than any this World can yield; All that, is Earthy, sensual, and too often Devilish: But this is Heavenly and Seraphick; Angelical and Divine. And though it be so, yet 'tis not the less vigorous or influential, rather the more so; as that which affects the Mind, is far more piercing and impressive than what only touches the Body. As the Apostle speaketh in another Case, *Though the weapons of our Warfare, are not carnal, yet they are mighty thro' God, to the pulling down of strong holds*, as in 2 Cor. 10. 4. So, tho' the Pleasure, the righteous meet there be not carnal, yet 'tis mighty thro' God, and very influential to the filling of their Minds with Joy and Comfort. For,

1. It is a true, solid, and *substantial Pleasure* that is there found; what the World affords is but *fancy and imagination*; and very little more than a *Dream*. According to that Comparison of the Prophet in another Matter, *It is even as when a hungry Man dreameth, and behold he eateth, but when he awaketh his Soul is empty: Or as when a thirsty Man dreameth, and behold he drinketh, but he awaketh and behold he is faint, and his Soul hath Appetite*, Isa. 29. 8. All the Satisfaction the World yields, is only like the Pleasure of a *Dream*, there is nothing in't. 'Tis shallow and superficial, and we are soon at the bottom of it; whereas God's *House*, to the Religious Performers of those Gospel Ordinances there administered, yields a true and very sensible Pleasure. According to that of David, *the Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart*, Ps. 19. 8. There are but very few things, if any, that this World yields, which can fill the hearts of the Children of Men: Please them they may a little while; but 'tis but in a faint and low degree. Whereas the *Statutes of God* faithfully observ'd and practis'd, do rejoice the very Hearts and Souls of Believers. But then,

2. *Secondly*,

2. Secondly, They not only meet with true, but satisfactory Pleasures here: However, the World seems to tickle us a little, with its flattering Vanities, yet it doth not satisfy us; nor indeed can do. 'Twas a witty Fancy of him, that gave this reason for it (tho' whether exactly true I shan't dispute) because the *World* is *round*, and the *Heart of Man triangular*; and a Circle or *Orb* can't fill a *Triangle*. However that be, this we know, That the whole *World*, as large as it is, is not able compleatly to fill the *Heart of Man*, so small as it may seem. He that hath possessed as much of the *World* as was to be found in it, all the Honours, all the Riches, all the Pleasures of it, hath always found something or other wanting; and still had some Needs or Necessities or other, (real or imaginary) unsupplied: Witness *Alexander*, who having conquer'd (as he thought) the whole *World*, sat down and wept, for that there were no more *Worlds* to conquer.

But then the *House* of God yields a full and satisfactory Enjoyment; answers all the Needs and all the Desires too of the Soul. So *David*, Ps. 36. 7, 8. *How excellent is thy Loving-kindness, O God! therefore the Children of Men put their trust under the shadow of thy Wings: They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the River of thy Pleasures — with the fatness of thy House — In God's House is a feast of fat things; a feast of Wines on the Lees, of fat things full of Marrow, of Wines on the Lees well refin'd*, Isa. 25. 6. What are all those Metaphors, from things that yield the most sensual Gratifications to our natural Appetites for, but as so many Demonstrations of that more real spiritual Delight and Pleasure, which sanctified Souls do find in the House and Ordinances of God? Give me leave to refer you to one Passage of the same Royal Psalmist elsewhere; 'tis in the 65. Ps. 4. v. *Blessed is the Man whom thou chusest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts: We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy Temple.* Where the Prophet gives a Reason why they shall be blessed that approach God, and dwell in his Courts, because they shall be satisfied with the Goodness of God's *House*, even of his holy *Temple*. All the Delights of this *World* are as I said, *non-satisfactory*: But the *House* of God yields true Contentment, satisfactory Joys and Comforts. There is more real Delight and Satisfaction to the righteous, in one *Lord's Day*, well spent in God's *Sanctuary*, in one good *Sermon*, in one holy *Sacrament* worthily received, than all the admired things of this Life are able to yield. And this is another ground of their Amiability to God's People.

3. The Righteous find in God's Tabernacle surpassing Pleasure and Delight; much excelling, far exceeding all other Gratifications what-

soever. Thus Holy Job profess'd, *I have esteemed the word of his Mouth, more than my necessary food*, Job 23. 12. There is nothing more pleasant, more desireable to an hungry Man, than his Food ; tho' Man don't live by bread alone, yet he can't live without it, i. e. without Food convenient for him. Yet how necessary soever that be, Job here declares, that the Statutes and Commandments of God were dearer to him than that. So David also, the Judgments of the Lord, (his Statutes and Ordinances) are more to be desired than Gold, than much fine Gold ; they are sweeter also than honey and the Honey-Comb. Nothing in Nature is sweeter than Honey, nothing in Fancy dearer than Gold. Yet David declares, that the Ordinances of God were to be desired not so much as a little Gold, but much of the best refined Gold ; nor so sweet as the Honey, but the Honey-Comb ; nay, more to be desired than much Gold, and more sweet than the Honey-Comb.

Thus speaking of God's House or Tabernacle (for the Temple was not built in David's time) he professes that a Day there, was better than a thousand elsewhere, as you see at the 10. v. of this 84. Ps. *A day in thy Courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a Door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of Wickedness.* Where you see what surpassing Joy and Pleasure the House of God afforded in good David's Opinion, that he declares he had rather be one day there, than a thousand any other where. And that he would chuse rather to be the Ostiarius, the Door-keeper or Sexton of God's House, than to dwell in the stateliest Pavilions of Sin and Wickedness.

Oh ! How different is the Temper and Frame here, of this good King, from the Complexion of the present Age in Matters of Religion ? David hath rather be one Day in God's House, than a thousand anywhere else : Our People generally, had rather be a thousand anywhere else, than one Day in God's House. What a Wearisomeness is it to them to serve the Lord ? And how are they ready to say, with those the Prophet mentions †, *When will the New-Moon be gone that we may set forth Corn? And the Sabbath that we may sell Wheat?* There's hardly any thing more irksome or tedious to 'em, than to be employ'd in the intense Worship and Service of God. But then, pray consider, if an Hour or two, once in a Week, be so very tedious to be bestowed in these Affairs, how can you, with any Comfort, think of making them your sole Employment for a whole Eternity ?

We must not think, that the *Eternal State* of the Blessed doth consist in *Sloth and Idleness*; but rather in a continued active Praising and Blessing God for ever. But then it is without any *tedium, or Wearisomeness*

Wearisomeness at all. Their Employment, whatever the particular Instances of it be, will be a great part of their Happiness; and to their highest Satisfaction. Which we may partly infer from that surpassing Delight, many zealous Servants of God, take in his House and Service here. They have (as it were) some *Prelibrations*, or Fore-tastes of the Joys above, after which they so heartily aspire. This then is a farther ground of that surprizing Amiability which they see in the *Tabernacles* of God.

Lastly, Farther yet they find there, a durable and *lasting Pleasure* and *Delight*; and that's another Reason they are so taken with the Loveliness of it. Whatever Loveliness or Beauty, we see upon the Face of the World, in any the particular Objects of it, it is not only but Skin deep, but very short and uncertain. What more fresh and lovely than a *Lilly*? *Solomon in all his Royalty, was not arrayed like one of these: Yet by to morrow it is cut down, dried up, and wither'd.* Whatever Delights or Pleasures we reap from any, or all the Enjoyments of the World, they may be well compared to the *crackling of Thorns under a Pot* *; they make a noise * Eccl. 7. 6. and blaze for a little while, but are soon out and expire in unsavoury Smoke.

'Tis not so with these Joys and Pleasures the House of God affords, those who conscientiously frequent it; That yields a most permanent and durable Delight. Such an one, which the World can't give, so it can't take away. Those cruel Tyrants, *Nero, Dioclesian, Maximian* †, and others that could take away the Lives of Christians, could not take from them the Joy and Delight which sprung up in their Souls, from a faithful Attendance upon God in his House. We have several Examples to this purpose, in our own *Books of Martyrs* ||: particularly of one *Bainham*, who cried out in the midst of the Fire, *I feel no more pain than if I were in a Bed of Down: but it is to me as a Bed of Roses.* And Bishop *Farrar* before his Death, told a Friend of his, *That if he saw him once to stir, in the pains of his Burning, he should then give no Credit to his Doctrine;* and he right well perform'd the same *.

What can we imagine it was supported the Hearts and Spirits of these, and many other *Martyrs* of Christ, but that Joy and Comfort, which they had found in the House of God, which did not forsake them in the *Flames*? *In the multitude of my Thoughts within me, saith David, thy Comforts delight my Soul,* Ps. 94.19. 'Tis only the Comforts of God, can sustain any sinking and fainting Souls: And those Comforts the righteous seek and find in God's *House*, in his holy *Tabernacle*. Here their

<sup>+ Sulp. Sev.
Sac. Hist. l. 2.</sup>

<sup>|| Fox Act. and
Mon. Vol. 2.
249.</sup>

<sup>* Id. ibid. vol.
3. p. 178.</sup>

their true Joy and Pleasure begins, but it never ends to all Eternity. 'Tis true, it may be somewhat interrupted in this Vale of Tears, as the Sun it self may suffer an *Eclipse*, or be a while under a Cloud. *In a little wrath, God may bide his Face for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will he have mercy upon them, Isa. 54. 8.* From all which Considerations you may come to be fully convinced of the transcendent Amiability of God's House, which produces Joys, Pleasures and Delights, which nor *Death* nor *Hell* can spoil the *Righteous* of.

2. Secondly, I now come to consider what is the true *Ground* of that Delight and Pleasure, which the Righteous find in the *House* of God; i. e. in the Place of his *Publick Worship* and *Service*: Which I shall do in one or two Particulars.

1. It arises partly from that Christian *Society*, the *Righteous* there have with one the other. *Society* is the great Comfort of humane Life: Without this, what would the *World* be, but a desolate *Wilderness*? God himself saw it was not good, *for Man to be alone*: Tho' 'tis indeed better be without some Company than with it. For Company may be well compared to *Æsop's Tongues*, 'tis the best and the worst Dish. Or like the Prophets two *Baskets of Figs*; the one of which was very good, the other very bad, *Jer. 24. 2.* Company is good, if it be good Company: If evil, nothing more dangerous. We know how much Persons are wont to be taken (according to their Humour and Capacity) with wise, or pleasant, or witty, or courteous, nay, or debauch'd Company, and what Satisfaction it often yields.

But then no *lewd debauch'd Companions* in the World, yield so true Delight and Gratification to themselves, as Christian Society, piously improv'd, doth to one the other. Their mutual engaging in the Duties of true *Religion*, enkindles a rejoicing and delight in one towards the other: As we see sensual Peoples enjoying one the other, in profane Courses, often does.

The *Communion of Saints* is an *Article* of our *Faith*: Now what is *Communion*, but a *Common Union*, an *Union* of *Hearts* and *Affections*? And where that is, especially in Holy things, in the *Faith* and *Fear* of God, in the *Publick Ordinances* of the *Gospel* of our Saviour Christ, the Result of it, is an high and real Gratification and Delight. Holiness and Religion is of an assimilating Nature; it is apt to convert all it converses with, into it self, as *Fire* is observed to do. Like the *Philosophers Stone*, that is said (how truly let them look to that) to turn all it touches into Gold. What then causes a Likeness, that creates a Love, and Love begets Delight? *Simile simili gaudet* — is as true as old.

Now there is a true real delight, which the righteous take in one the other; a remarkable *Example* whereof we have in *David*, tho' a great

great King, in the 16. Ps. 2, 3. *My Goodness extendeth not to thee (speaking to God) but to the Saints that are in the Earth; and to the excellent in whom is all my Delight.* The truly Righteous, be they ever so high, or otherwise distinguished in the World, do delight in such as are righteous, be they ever so low or mean. And upon a serious Consideration, we shall find this is not strange; nay, it would be inhumane and monstrous if it should be otherwise: For they are *Members one of another.* And where one *Member rejoices the other rejoices with it;* be the one ever so noble in the Body, or the other ever so ignoble; and that Health and Harmony among them, produces their mutual Delight and Felicity in one the other.

'Tis so in the *Body Mystical* of Christ's Church; where all the Members, at what distance soever they seem to be placed, tho' as far asunder, as the *head* and the *heel*, they all delight and rejoice in one another, in a Divine and Spiritual manner. And especially to meet on the other, in the *House of God*; and the Celebration of his *Worship* and *Service*. What Satisfaction is it to carnal sensual Men, to meet at a great *Feast* or *Entertainment*? But 'tis a greater to spiritually-minded Christians, to meet together at this divine Banquet. Christ and the Gospel are compared to a great *Feast*, which the King made for the *Marriage* of his *Son*. And there is a mutual Comfort, that who truly partake of this *Feast*, do meet within one the other, in the due Celebration of the *Publick Duties of Religion*; especially where they are unanimous, in the same *form* of *Worship* and *Devotion*. Where they all *stand*, where they ought to *stand*; and *kneel*, where they ought to *kneel*; and *speak* when they ought (in the *Antiphonies* and *Responses*) and are *silent* when they ought. *There is not under Heaven* (whereof it seems the Resemblance) *a more blessed, pleasant Sight, than to see a Congregation of true sincere Christians thus met together.*

But alas! our *Congregations* generally, are not such; no, such a sight is near as rare as the *Black Swan*. There is too much Carnality and Worldly-mindedness, even among such as call themselves *Christians*, to delight in each others Christian Society so far, as to render the *Church* where they meet, Amiable and Lovely in their Eyes. We must acknowledge (the more's the pity) there is not that true mutual Love and Dearness among us there ought to be. No; rather Envy, Malice, Animosities abound every where, to the Shame of our *Persons*, and the Blemish of our *Profession*. However, there is nothing more our Duty, than *Love and Charity*: 'Tis of all other, the distinguishing *Badge* of a Christian; by this shall all Men know ye are my Disciples (says our *Saviour**) if ye *Joh. 13. 35. love one the other. And where this *Charity* and *Love*,

where

where Humility and Meekness, where a well manag'd Zeal and Devotion, abound among Christians, these things endear to one the other, not only themselves but the Place of their Assembly.

2. This Amiability of God's Tabernacle, is especially founded upon the *Enjoyment* of the gracious Presence of God there. He is most chiefly to be met with, in the Congregation of Saints; as the Expression is, *Ps. 149. 1.* in his own *House*, in the *Assemblies* of his People; for there hath he promised to be — *Where two or three are duly met together in his Name.* Thus he is said to dwell in the midst of the *Camp* of the Children of *Israel**; i.e. in

* *Num. 5. 3.* his Holy *Tabernacle*: Because he had appointed that the *Tabernacle* should be in the midst of the *Camp*, *Num. 2.*

17. The *Psalmist* tells us of a River, the Streams whereof shall make glad the City of God; the Holy Place of the *Tabernacles* of the most high? What is that Stream? 'Tis the Stream of God's Grace and Favour who is in the midst of her; as you may see *Psal. 46. v. 4. 5.*

When the *Daughters of Jerusalem* brake out into this Enquiry, *Whether is thy Beloved gone, O! thou fairest among women?* *Whether is thy Beloved turned aside that we may seek him with thee?* The Answer the Spouse returned was this, *My Beloved is gone down into his Garden, to the Beds of Spices, to feed in the Gardens, and to gather Lillies,* & *Cant. 1. 2. v.* Would you know where to find the gracious and blessed Presence of Almighty God? of your merciful Saviour and Redeemer? You will have him in his *Garden* (in his *Tabernacle*) among the *Beds of Spices* (in his holy *Ordinances*) where he is gathering *Lillies* (the *Souls* of the faithful, which he bindeth up in the *Bundle of Life* and presenteth to the Father, as a fragrant and most acceptable Posie.) you will find him then in his *Garden*; in his own *Garden House*, the *Church*, if you *seek him* there (as you ought) upon your *bended knees*, in humble *Prayer*: There will you *bear* him *speak* to you, if you open your *Ears* attentively to him, in the *Preaching* of the *Gospel*. Nay, there will you *receive* him in your *Arms*, yea, in your *Hearts* (if you come as you ought) in the *Holy Sacrament*.

Now of all Society whatever, none so Honourable, none so Pleasant, none so Beneficial, as that of Almighty God. If you did but consider, you would soon acknowledge, That 'tis your highest Honour, as well as Privilege, that you may be admitted to his *Tabernacle*; that he, in whose Presence the *Angels* tremble, will accept your poor Services, and permit your Attendance there, yet we find (to our great Comfort, as well as Astonishment) with what Condescension, and Earnestness too, he is pleased to invite us to his House.

This

This is the great King that made a *Marriage-Supper* for his Son ; and at *Supper time* sent out his Servants to call those that were invited. And when he saw they were slack in coming, he sent out others and bids them *compel* them to come in, that his house may be furnished with Guests. All which may be referr'd to the *Gospel*, and may represent that Willingness Christ hath, to meet People in his *House* and in the Celebration of the *Ordinances* thereof.

How far People may be *compell'd* in matters of *Religion*, I shan't at present undertake to determine : But that People should be let alone, in their *Profaneness*, and the negle^ct of all *Publick Divine Worship*, this certainly is intollerable. Were People but sensible of their own exceeding great Privilege, did they but know their own Happiness, they would need no Laws, no Exhortations to make them go to *Church*, and the Place of God's *Publick Worship*. That infinite *Delight* and *Comfort* of meeting and enjoying the gracious *Smiles* and *Loving-kindness* of Almighty God there, would very effectually oblige them to it.

If we have ever truly met, and enjoyed God, in his *Ordinances*, there's nothing we shall so much delight in ever after. See Holy David to this purpose, in the 63. Ps. 1. 2. v. O ! God, my Soul thirsteth for thee ; my flesh longeth for thee ; in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is. Why ? What's the Matter ? That you find at the next ver. To see thy Power and thy Glory, so as I have seen them in thy *Sanctuary*. What was it that made the Kingly Prophet, thus to prefer the *Tabernacle* of God ? So earnestly to long for it, as the parched Earth doth for the Showers of Rain ? 'Twas because he had met God there ; had seen God there, as it were Face to Face ; had enjoyed him there in the large Display of his Love and Mercy. Hence he desired nothing more, nothing so much, as that he might see him again ; and see him so as he had seen him in his *Sanctuary*. There he may be found ; and there he is (as it were) at *home*. And he that meets his friend at *home*, may expect the more free and hearty welcome, were it not for this blessed Presence, David met with there, this *Tabernacle* would have been no more Amiable to him than another *Dwelling*. That which renders the *Church* or *House* of God, more lovely or desirable than another Place, is that relation it hath to God.

Thus have I dispatch'd the *Doctrinal* Part of my Text, and have shewn, what is here meant by the *Tabernacle* of God ; the Place of his *Publick Worship*, unto whom it is so transcendently Amiable ; unto the Righteous. Why and upon what account ? because to their great *Comfort* and *Delight*, they enjoy God there in his *Ordinances*. I now proceed to what is the Life of *Doctrine*, a more particular Application of it.

Application. Since the Apostle hath told us, That *all Scripture given by Inspiration of God, is profitable, for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and for Instruction in Righteousness,* 2 Tim. 3. 16. I shall endeavour to make the present Subject so all these ways.

1. First, This may be *Profitable* — περι μαθασκατιαν — for *Doctrine*; for your *Information* in the Truth of God. Seeing the *Tabernacle* of God, the Place consecrated to his Publick Worship, is so fair and lovely, Christians ought to be very careful that they don't any way *stain* the *Beauty* of it.

There are three ways whereby it may be blemish'd and defiled, by *Sin*, by *Sacrilege*, and by *Profane Use*; and you ought to beware in all these.

1. *Sin* is the worst Defilement; there's nothing defiles the *Temple* of God, either figuratively, or materially considered more than *Sin*. When any notorious Wickedness is acted or committed in it, this even *Desecrates* and *unhallows* the *House* of God.

1. Now Sins are of divers kinds, some gross and bodily; some Mental and Spiritual. We read of *Spiritual Wickednesses in heavenly places*, Eph. 6. 12. Sins not visible to the bodily Eye, acted in holy Places. Altho' then, the more gross and sensual Sins be not committed in our Churches, yet those which are more refin'd and spiritual, we see and know are; such as *Pride*, *Envie*, *Malice*, and *Uncharitableness*. These are too frequently brought into the House and Presence of God himself: Which no less defile the sacred Place, than others which are more gross and carnal. As is observ'd of the *Air*; tho' it can't be seen with the Eye, is a moister Element, according to *Aristotle*, than Water that is, and that wets us more. These then, as well as any others, should be carefully avoided every where; but especially in the *House* of God, for the *Pollution* they bring into it, as well as the *Scandal*.

2. But then there are other sins, which no less dangerously stain, and defile the *Tabernacle* of God, and they as the Sins of *Heresie* and *false Doctrine*. The Preaching down any fundamental Article of *Faith*, the Preaching up of dangerous Errors in *Faith* or *Practise*, these are they, which in a great Measure defile the *House* of God; they are the *Plague* in the very Walls thereof, Levit. 14. 39. and a hard matter it is, once enter'd, to get it out.

How much any of the Houses of God in the Land, are, or have been, defiled herewith, Experience testifies, and future Generations will know to their cost. It becomes them therefore, who are *Overseers of the Lord's House*, to beware in this particular Respect; especially for that we are fallen into *perillous times*, in those Matters. When *Heresies* and *monstrous Tenents* in Religion every where so much abound,

abound, *Arrianism, Socinianism, Deism*, and the like. It chiefly becomes the *Ministers* of the Gospel, to look well to their *Churches*; and to see that they neither bring in any such Defilement themselves, nor suffer any other so to do.

God's *House* is Holy and Amiable, but Sin exceedingly defiles it; and you have heard what Sins they are which especially do it, that you may avoid them.

2. That which farther *defiles* the Lovely *Face of Gods House* is *Sacrilege*. When vile and profane People, as the *Psalmist* expresses it, *break down the carved Work thereof, with Axes and Hammers*, Ps. 74. 6. do Violence to the External Beauty and Figure of it, in decent Paintings, Gildings, and the like; bestowed upon it to render it more *august* and *venerable* in our Eyes, and more expressive of that *glorious Majesty*, unto which it belongs.

But then there is a farther way of defacing the *Amiableness* thereof, and that is by a *sacrilegious robbing of it*, of any of the rich Ornaments and Utensils, as *Vessels, Carpets, Vestments* and the like, which hath been bestowed upon it, for the more decent celebrating of God's Worship and Service therein. But more especially, by *Robbing* it of those *Tithes, Lands, Houses*, and other *Endowments*, which pious People have invested it with, for the support of the *Gospel*, and for the *Encouragement* of those who are to *minister* therein.

Now how hainous a Crime *Sacrilege* is, under the *Gospel*, we may infer from that dreadful Curse, heretofore denounced by the *Bishop*, at the settling any thing on the *Church*, upon those, who shall presume to alienate it, in these *dreadful Words*, which for the *Terroure* of all *Church-Harpies*, I shall here subjoin *.

* Ex Lib. dict.
Festivale p.an-
penult.

' *Ex autoritate Dei patris, omnipotentis, S. Mariae Virginis & omnium Sanctorum, Excommunicamus, Anathematizamus, & Diabolo commendamus, omnes supradictos Malefactores, Excommunicati sint, Anathematizati, & Diabolo commendati; maledicti sint, in villis, in Campis, in Viis, in Semitis, in Domibus, extra Domos, & in omnibus aliis Locis, stando, sedendo, jacendo, surgendo, ambulando, currendo, dormiendo, comedendo, bibendo, & aliud opus faciendo; & illos alimib; omnibus bonis Ecclesia sequestramus, & Diabolo damnamus, & in pœnis inferni animas eorum extinguamus, sicut extinguitur ista Candela, nisi resipiscant & ad satisfactionem veniant. Et tunc extinguitur Lumen.*

In English thus,

' By the Authority of God the Father Omnipotent, of the Holy Virgin Mary, and of all Saints, we excommunicate, Anathematize, and give over to the Devil, all the aforesaid Malefactors (i. e. Sa-

(clerical Persons) Let them be excommunicated, cursed and given over to the Devil. Let them be accursed in the Village and in the Field; in the Way, and in the Path; in the House, and out of the House, and in all other Places, standing, sitting, lying, rising, walking, running, sleeping, eating, drinking, or doing any other thing. And we sequester them from the very threshold of the Church, and all the good things thereof; we damn them to the Devil; and extinguish their Souls in Hell-fire, even as this Candle is extinguished, unless they shall repent and make Satisfaction. And then the Bishop puts out the Candle, which all the while he denounces the Sentence he holds in his hand.

We have also a dreadful Example for this, even in the New Testament it self. Words, some may account them but as Wind; but this was a signal Judgment, viz. St. Peter's blasting *Ananias* and *Sapphira* for this Sin of Sacrilege; so that they immediately wither'd and died in the Place. It was (it seems) agreed by the Church, to sell all they had, and so repose the Money in the Apostles hands, for the general supply of all occasions*. *Ananias* had

*Act. 4. v. 32. ad fin. a parcel of Land, he sold it; and his Wife consenting, he kept back part of the Money to his own private use: For which you see, God struck them both dead in the Place, *Act. 5.* begin.

St. Paul also ranks Sacrilege among the worst of Sins; saying, *Thou that abhorrest Idols, committest thou Sacrilege?* Rom. 2. 22. As if Sacrilege were at least as bad, if not worse than Idolatry.

We have had those among us, who were wonderful nice in respect of Idols: They were afraid of every thing, that it was an Idol; the Common-Prayer-Book was an Idol; Bishops were Idols; the Cross in Baptism, the Surplice and the like, these were all Idols; and they could not abide them, for fear (good Men!) they should be defiled with Idols. Yet we well remember, how glibly they could swallow Sacrilege, Church-Lands, Church-Plate, Church-Ornaments, things of any Worth or Value, that lay in their way, these were no Idols; there was no Idolatry in them; those tender-conscienc'd Men, could swallow these things well enough.

I should have been loath to have rub'd so severely on this soar, but that we may fear such Birds of Prey are still hovering in the Air, over the small remainder of the Church Revenues; and only watch a fit opportunity to be catching at it. But let them fear the Eagle's Fate, who catching a Goblet of the Sacrifice from off the Altar, carried a Coal with it, that burnt up her Nest and all her Young. 'Tis observable, how very few that have usurped upon the Churches Rights have ever prospered in their unjust Possessions: Beware here,

3. There is another way of staining the Amiable Face of God's House, and that is by putting it to any *common or profane use*: Im- ploying of it in any of our worldly Affairs or Busines. The very *Heathens* (as *Historians* tell us) are very tender and scrupulous in respect to their Temples (tho' devoted to *Stacks or Stones, to Beasts or Fishes, to Fiends or Devils*) and are so far from putting them to any common use, that they won't permit a Stranger to approach them, or so much as to look into them: 'Tis no less than a *Capital Crime* (if he be known) for any to do so. This I mention to the Shame of Christians, who can suffer their *Churches and Yards* to be de- filed, by *Drinking, Smoaking, Playing, Quarrelling*, and many otherways; contrary indeed to the Rule of our Church *, which re- quires the Officers to suffer, *no Plays, Feasts, Banquets, Suppers, Drinkings, Musters, or any other profane Usage, to be kept in the Church, Chappel, or Church-Yard.*

But among all the Profane Uses, *God's House* is put to, I don't hold that the least, the common and promiscuous *Burying of the Dead* therein. Even they, whose Lives deserv'd, they should have had a Place under some *Gallows or Dunghill*, at their Deaths. *Swearers, Drunkards, Oppressors, Murtherers*, and the like, when they die, shall often have their *Carrion Carkases* buried in the *House of God*. A sad Instance of the decay of *Ecclesiastical Discipline* among us; which might it have its due effect, would greatly prevent this vile Abuse of so sacred a Place. I must profess my self of the Opinion, in this Matter, of that *pious Prelate*, sometime of this *Church*, I mean *Bishop Hall*, who in his last *Will and Testament* declares †, *That he did not hold God's House a meet Re-* † Bp. Hall's Remains.

pository for the dead Bodies of the greatest Saints.

And as to any secular common Use, 'tis remarkable, That our ³*Sa- viour* would not permit the *Jews* so much as to carry a *Vessel* through the *Temple*; nor to buy and sell, in the outmost Courts of it. Hence he overturn'd the *Tables* of the *Money-Changers*, and made a *Whip* of small *Cords*, and drove the *Buyers* and *Sellers* out of the *Temple*.

Now 'tis fit you should know what part of the *Temple* it was, our *Saviour* drove those People out of ||: Not out of the first *Court*, that contain'd the *Holy of Holies*; nor out of the second *Court*, which was the *Priests*, wherein was the *Brazen Altar* for *Sacrifice*, and the *Laver*. Nor out of two parts of the third *Court*, which consisted of three Partitions; in the first of which were the *Jewish Men*; in the second the *Jewish*

|| *Wetby's Separat. of Places,*
p. 125, 126.

Jewish Women; and in the Third, or outmost of all, were the *Gentiles*, which were received as *Proselytes of the Gate*.

Out of this last Court only it was, our Saviour Christ drove these *Buyers and Sellers*. For because the Jews themselves did not worship in it, they conceived it might be put to lay Employment. Who being obliged to come thrice a Year, from the utmost parts of their *Country*, to make their *Offerings at Jerusalem*, for the Ease of the People that came from far, the *Money-Changers* here set up their *Tables*; and others in like manner, brought thither *Sheep and Oxen*, and *Doves*, to sell to them, who had not brought their *Sacrifices* with them. All these *Traders and Traffickers*, in this outmost Court of the *Gentiles*, Christ drove out with a *Scourge*, telling them it was a Place of *Prayer*, and had been hallowed to *Ecclesiastick Ministries*, and set apart for holy things; and therefore their Lay-*Employments* did Dishonour to it, as my *Author* well observes.

And we may take notice, that our Saviour shew'd this Action (as if he had been jealous of the Honour of his *House*) the greatest *Heat* and *Violence* he had ever done in his whole *Conversation*. Wonderful it is too, that a single Man (as he was thought) should overturn, whip and drive out, so great a Multitude of Men, and Beasts, as were there together: Which indeed is none of the smallest *Demonstrations of his Divinity*, nor the least *Miracle of his Life*.

If then our *Blessed Saviour* was so zealous for his *House*, and would not allow it to be put to any *common, worldly*, tho' honest *Use*, because 'twas the *House of Prayer*, why may we not conclude of our *Churches*, that he hath still the same Concern and Tenderness for them, for the very same Reason? i. e. for that they are *dedicated to his Name*, to be *Houses of Prayer* and other *Gospel Rites*, which are pleasing and acceptable to him?

The Church of God then being so *Amiable*, we may hence learn this Truth, That we ought not to defile it. So much for the first Inference.

2. Secondly, This Text of Holy Scripture may be farther *profitable* — περι λεγχον — according to our English Translation, for *Reproof*; whereas the Word, properly signifies — *argumentis convincere, refutare*. To convince by Arguments; to refute. From this place of Holy Scripture, we may come to *Refute*, two common and dangerous *Errors*, which many among us in this Age are guilty of, in relation to the *House of God*. We may hence Refute in the

1. First place, The *Error* of those who too much deprete, and disesteem, the *consecrated Places* of God's Publick Worship and Service.

2. In the Second place, The *Error* of those also, who too highly magnifie *private Houses* and *profane Places*, for that use and purpose.

1. This

i. This may convince those of their Error, who lessen and undervalue the Places consecrated to God's Publick Worship. How many such have there been, and are still among us, who openly despise the Tabernacle of the Lord? Spitefully terming our Churches Steeple-Houses, Temples of Baal, Idol-Synagogues*, and the like: In their fiery Zeal, equalling if not preferring ordinary and mean Places, to the best of them, whereas we owe great Reverence and Respect unto 'em, as consecrated and dedicated to God and his Service; whereby they become, at least relatively sacred, and ought to be treated as such.

* Mr. Hook.
Eccl. Pol. Lib.
5. Num. II.

I shan't go about to defend, all the *superstitious Ceremonies*, that have been practis'd, in *consecrating* of Churches, as the *Bishops sprinkling the Walls* with *Holy Water*, going *three* times about the outside of the Church, knocking *three* times at the Door with his *Pastoral Staff*, making a *Cross* in the Pavement with *Ashes* and *Sand*, on which the *Alphabet* was written in *Greek* and *Latin Letters*; and *twelve Crosses* on the *Walls*, with such other Fopperies, to be seen in *Durandus* †, with the Signification of them. I ^{+ Ration. Divin. quo prius.} say, I shan't undertake to justifie all these *Ceremonies*, in this Performance: But a decent *Consecration* of them, in a pious, sober manner, may and ought to be defended.

There was, we find, nothing acceptable with God, among his own People the *Jews*, whether *Tabernacle*, *Altar*, *Censers*, *Vestments*, *Priests*, &c. but what was *consecrated*. The *Consecration* of *Christian Churches* is derived from the *Old Testament*; and practised by the *Holy Fathers under the New* (as in the *Constitutions of Otho* ||) which ought, faith he, much more especially to be ^{|| Linw. in calce ult. Edit.} observ'd; for that under the *Old Testament*, there was nothing offer'd, but the *Sacrifice* of dead Beasts; but under the *New* the true and living *Sacrifice* of *Jesus Christ* is represented as offer'd for us. And the *History of the Church* informs us, that in the first *Agés of Christianity*, *Churches* were not only built and set apart for *Religious Worship*, but also formally *consecrated* by *Bishops* — per *Diæcesanos Episcopos, ad quos pertinet, vel eorum Authoritate, per alios consecrentur*, as that famous foremention'd *Legate* decreed here in *England** — (of which I gave some Examples in the beginning of this Discourse, and might add others) This was done by *Prayer* and *Religious Rites*; which so long as they are grave, pious, and pertinent are no way to be flighted or condemned. For indeed (as one observes†) all *Nations and Religions* have consented unto, and in all *Agés* practised, the *Separation* of *Publick Places of Worship*, by *Prayer* and other *Religious Circumstances*. Not barely

* Ibid. per alios, i. e. Episcopos Glos.

† Wemy's quo sup. p. 105.

barely by having *Prayer* in them: For then every private House, where *Prayers* are perform'd, would become a *Church*; but by *Prayers*, especially for that occasion. I say, this hath been, all along, the general Practice of *Christians* in all Ages (when and where they might) until now of late in this Kingdom among our selves: Where we may see many great Pretenders to Christianity, as boldly celebrate the Publick Worship of God, in the *vilest Places*, as if they were the most sacred Temples in the World. Even *Heathens*, as well as *Jews* and *Christians*, consecrated their Temples, as well as their *Priests*; and the *Mahometans* practise it to this Day.

Churches then, and *Places* of God's Publick Worship being set apart, and consecrated by devout *Prayers* (and other decent Rites) of good *Bishops* and *People*, ought among *Christians*, to be had in great Honour and esteem; and not to be so slighted and despised, as generally they are: And the rather for that *solemn Dedication* is made of them to God, The true and rightful Owner and Founder making away all his Right therein to Almighty God, by the hand of the *Bishop*, for the Publick Worship and Service of our *Saviour* ever after, we need not question, (if done in a pious sincere manner) his gracious Acceptation of it; for thereby it becomes God's Propriety indefeasible.

* Dur and quo Consecratio (says the Ritualist *) duo efficit, &c. Consecration (says he) effects two things, it appropriates the Church to God; and insinuates the Espousals to him, as well of the Church, as the Souls of Believers. An House, says he a little after, not consecrated or dedicated, is like a Virgin betrothed but not married nor dowered: but in consecratione dotatur, & transfit in propriam Jesu Christi Sponsam — by Consecration it receives the dower and passes into the relation of the Spouse of Jesus Christ. So that Learned Author.

The great Matter here in doubt, seems only this, whether Almighty God is pleased to accept of *Churches*, and *Revenues*, thus devoted and consecrated to his Service? That he was pleased to accept of the

Temple at *Jerusalem*, at first begun (as some Learned Men note ||) by no particular Command of his, is apparent enough; for he calls it *his House*, and claims a Propriety therein. Thus also he accepted of the *Synagogues* (of which Number were no less than 400 in *Jerusalem*) tho' erected by no special Command of his: For he calls them God's *Synagogues*, Ps. 74. 8.

Then under the *New Testament*, when the *Jews* urged our *Saviour* to heal the *Centurion's Servant*, they used this Argument, *He loveth our Nation, and hath built us a Synagogue*. Then Jesus went with him, 'tis said, Luk. 7. 4, 5, 6. as if he had highly approved of that Instance of the *Centurion's Piety*. He was so pleased also with the primitive

primitive *Christians*, giving *all they had* to pious and charitable Uses, that he severely punished *Annanias* and *Saphira*, for defaulting part of the *devoted Summ*, as you heard before. Now God's *Publick Worship* and *Service* continuing our Duty (which is still fit and proper to be discharged in the most decent becoming Place, duly hallowed to such a divine Purpose) we need not at all doubt or question, but that he is graciously pleased still to accept of such pious *Dedications*; and always will to the end of the World. Nay, farther, That he looks upon them as his *own peculiar Right and Propriety*; and will punish accordingly, all *Sacrilegious Violators* of them.

2. If God's House be so peculiarly and transcendently *Lovely*, what Presumption is it in those, who equal, yea, prefer *common base Houses* before *consecrated Churches*? 'Tis true, as to the matter whereof they are made, they may differ nothing. *Sed per Mysterium Dedicationis, invisibile fit Templum Domini* — as 'tis said in one of the *Constitutions of Othobon* * : by the *Mystery of Dedication* ^{* Lindw. quo supra.} the Church becomes the *invisible Temple of the Lord*; i.e. a Temple tho' visible to Man's Eyes, yet 'tis that wherein Almighty God delights to dwell in an invisible manner.

This notwithstanding, how many are there among us, who chuse to forsake God's *Tabernacles*, Places solemnly *consecrated* and *dedicated* to his *Worship* and *Service*, and *creep into Houses*? This *creeping into Houses* and leading captive silly Souls, is of no very good Reputation in the Opinion of the *Apostle*, 2 Tim. 3. 6. which yet some among us seem to make their Choice and to glory in. Nay, in Defiance to the Apostle, are not afraid to despise the Church of God, 1 Cor. 11. 22. — *Despise ye*, saith he, *the Church of God*? implying, that 'tis a great Sin and a dangerous thing, for any to despise God's *Church*, i. e. the *Place* set apart for his *Publick Worship* and *Service*.

For however some of our *Church-Despisers*, would fain have the *Apostle* to be understood of the *Church-Mystical*, i. e. the People there met together, and not the *Church Material*, 'tis plain he intends it of the *Church Material*, the *Place* of God's *Worship*. As may be inferr'd from that *Antithesis* he puts between the *Church of God*, and their *own Houses*. *What!* says he, *have ye not Houses to eat and drink in, but despise the Church of God?* The *Corinthians* here, it seems, would eat their own Supper in the *Church*, i. e. the *Place* of their *Worship*. This gave an offence to St. Paul; and he looks upon it so great a piece of *Profanation*, as amounts to a *despising* of it: Which, he insinuates is a hainous Crime. If there had been no difference in the Opinion of the *Apostle*, between *Private Houses* and *Publick Churches*, why should he here reprove them for eating in them? Why had it not been as lawful to have eaten there, as in any other

Place? If so, the *Apostle* (no doubt) would not so severely have Reprimanded them hereupon.

Give me leave to present you with the Opinion to this purpose, of our *Judicious Hooker* †, on those Words of St. Paul,

† Eccl. Pol. L.

5. N. 12. p.

204.

Have ye not Houses to eat and to drink in, &c. ‘ It hath been, not absurdly conceived (saith he) that the Apostle here teacheth, what difference should be between

‘ House and House; what is fit for the Dwelling-Place of God, and
 ‘ what for Man’s Habitation. He sheweth, that Christian Men at
 ‘ their own Houses take common Food, and in the House of the Lord
 ‘ none but that Food, which is Heavenly; he instructeth them, that
 ‘ as in one Place they use to refresh their Bodies, so they may in the
 ‘ other learn to seek the Nourishment of their Souls; and as they
 ‘ sustain there temporal Life, so here they should learn to make Pro-
 ‘ vision for Eternal. Christ would not suffer that the Temple should
 ‘ serve for a Place of Mart; nor the Apostle of Christ, that the
 ‘ Church should be made an Inn. When therefore, we sanctify or
 ‘ hallow Churches (saith he) that which we do is only to testify,
 ‘ That we make them Places of Publick Resort, that we invest God
 ‘ himself with them, and that we sever them from common Uses.
 ‘ Thus he.

Common things then should be done in common Places; but Holy things in Holy Places. Those Places may be fit enough for the ends unto which at first design’d, but not to be chosen for the most solemn Worship and Service of God. We know who they were, that sometime clamour’d against their *Brethren* of the *Separation*, after they themselves had shewn them the way for setting up *Altar* against *Altar*, and *Church* against *Church*. Whereas, what is their own Practice now, but worse, in setting up the most *profane Places*, in Opposition to God’s consecrated Temples and Churches? Nay, and Preferring them too?

What hath been spoken may serve to convince all serious Christians of their Error in those matters: So much for the 2d Inference.

3. Thirdly, This Place of Holy Scripture may be farther Profitable — περὶ ἐπανόσθωσιν — for Correction — i. e. for the Reproof of those, to whom the Lord’s Tabernacle is not truly Amiable; and who do openly manifest it, either by not frequenting it at all; or by frequenting it from a wrong Principle. Both which, are deserving of a severe Rebuke.

1. Some there are among us, to whom the Lord’s Tabernacle is so unamiable, that they won’t frequent it at all. Of which there are two sorts.

1. Some despise the Lord’s House how Amiable soever it be, from a Principle

a Principle of meer *Atheism* and *Irreligion*; for that they are without God, and without Christ in the World. Hence they neglect the *Church*, and all the *Ordinances* discharged therein; wholly neglect them, and throw them all up, as if they had no more Sence of Religion than the *Beasts that perish*.

Some such profane *Wretches* (nay, but too many) every where there are, who don't see the inside of God's *House*, from Month to Month, from Year to Year. And yet they go under the Name of *Christians*; and have been baptized into the Faith of *Christ*. But instead of being *Christians* indeed, they turn *Renegado's*, and wretched *Apostates*. Of whom we may say, in the Words of the *Apostle*, it had been better for them, *not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them*, 2 Pet. 2. 21. — Better — i. e. More tolerable, far easier, as our Blessed *Saviour* said unto *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*; *That it should be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment than for them*, Mat. 11. 22.

That such Profaneness indeed should be found among those as call themselves *Christians*, is not strange if that be true which is reported, one of the *Popes of Rome* * should sometime speak to *Cardinal Benbus* — *Quantum nobis profuit, Fabula ista de Christo?* — Which for Piety sake, I shall forbear to put into English. How much *Atheism*, *Deism*, *Socinianism*, and many other monstrous — *isms*, every where prevail among us, to the open Neglect, nay, Contempt of the Tabernacles of the Lord of Hosts, all observe, and good Men lament.

What *Reproof* therefore, is sharp and keen enough for such *Wretches*? Some of which, may be said to be worse than the *Devil*; for the *Devils believe and tremble* †, but they do neither. How do these, with the obstinate *Jews at Antioch*, *put away from them the Word of God?* and judge themselves unworthy of Everlasting Life? Act. 13. 46. Could this Discourse but reach their Ears or Eyes, I should caution them in the *Apostle's words* to those before-mentioned; *Beware therefore least that come upon you, which is spoken of in the Prophets, Behold! ye Despisers, and wonder and perish* ||. Sad and deplorable it is, such profane Persons should be found, and suffered to live in a *Christian Kingdom*: These are Crimes, as *Job* expresses it, *to be punished by the Judge*.

2. Others neglect God's House from another Principle, that is from *Fanaticism*; give me leave so to call it, not to *exasperate* any Person or Party whatever, but as what in one word is most expressive of my Meaning.

Of which Number are two sorts, or at least two distinct Degrees of them.

1. The first are such as are led, by a certain *Spirit of Enthusiasm*; pretending they are above *Ordinances*, above *Praying*, above *Hearing*, above *Receiving*; that these are *beggarly Elements*; that to observe them is to be still in the *Letter*, and not in the *Spirit*. Hence they fancy, God hath no other *Church* but themselves, no other *Sanctuary* but their *Hearts*; that in them he is in his *Temple*, or rather in his *Throne*. What need have they then (they think) of *Prayers*, *Sermons*, *Sacraments*, or *Houses* to celebrate these in, who are arriv'd at *Perfection*, and are already in *Heaven*, or rather that *Heaven* is in them? These, they say, are of no use to them; of which Number, have been some *Anabaptists*, *Quakers*, *Muggletonians*, and others.

We may then conclude, That these are such as hate and despise the *Material Fabrick of God's House*; and load it, with all the opprobrious Names they can invent; crying out against it, as the Children of *Edom* did against *Jerusalem*, *Down with it, down with it, even to the ground*, Ps. 137. 7. Against whom 'tis to no purpose to bring Demonstration of *Reason*, the Judgment of the *Fathers*, the *Testimony* of the *Scriptures*; they are above all these: We can only pray, *The Lord rebuke them*. But then

2. 2dly, Some again despise the *Tabernacle of the Lord* upon another Pretence (I mean *the Houses of God in the Land*) for that they have been abused in times of *Popery* to *Idolatry*, and since (as they say)

* Deut. 12. 2. to *Superstition*: And that by the *Law of God* *, the Places where *Idols* have been *worshipped*, are *devoted to utter Destruction*; so that their furious *Zeal* is all for

[†] Paget's He- ref. p. 96. destroying of them; of which Number we are told, were some of the *Independants* heretofore †. But as

Diogenes is said, to correct the *Pride of Plato*, with a greater *Pride* of his own, so do these Men correct *Superstition*; they pull down an *Image*, and in the room thereof, set up the *Idol* of their own *Imagination* with much greater *Superstition*.

If the Abuse of things were sufficient reason to take off their lawful Use, I wonder what we should have left for our Support and Comfort, either in respect to *Nature* or *Grace*. Han't our Meat, Drink, Rayment, &c. been abused by some or other, to *Pride*, *Luxury*, *Drunkennes*? May we not therefore be allowed to make a sober use of them? Have not the Dispensations of *Grace* been also egregiously abused? The *Bible*? the *Holy Scriptures* themselves? The *Blessed Sacraments*? Especially that of the *Lord's Supper*, even to *Idolatry* it self? As some *Learned Men* of the *Church of Rome* confess themselves, if the *Doctrine of Transubstantiation* be not true? May

not

not good Christians therefore, wrest these things out of *Superstitions* and *Idolatrous* hands, and make very good use of them?

'Tis very observable, what a *Learned Divine* of our own speaks, in answer to this *Objection* *, the *Jews* were required to cut off the *Canaanites*, because they were *Idolaters*: * *Hook. Eccl. Pol. Lib. 5. Num. 17.* Must we therefore look upon our selves oblig'd to cut off all *Idolaters* that come in our way? There was a special Reason, wherefore God required the *Israelites* to destroy all those *Temples*, and *Religious Places* in the Land, which had been abused to *Idolatry*; because there should be only one Place in the whole Country, whereunto his People might bring such *Offerings*, *Gifts*, and *Sacrifices*, as their Law did require.

If therefore *Temples* and *Churches* have been abused, as the Instruments of *Idolatry*, they need not be pull'd down and demolish'd; but sanctified again, and continued; being so conveniently framed for the People of God to serve and honour him therein, that no Man beholding them can chuse but think it exceeding great pity, they should ever be any otherwise employed. Strange! yet true it is, what the same *Author* farther notes, *That the Destruction of our Churches is desired, not now by Infidels, Pagans, or Turks* (no they convert *Christian Churches* into *Turkish Moschs*, as *Sancta Sophia* is now one of the most glorious in *Constantinople* †) *but by a Refined Sect of Christian Believers.* Thus our Reverend *Hooker*.

Such may be said indeed to have a *Zeal*, but not according to *Knowledge*. A blind *Zeal* is a dangerous thing; it may, *Sampson* like, pull down even the *Houses of God to the Ground*. But then all the while, they who are guilty herein, are execrated by the *Psalmist*, *Ps. 83. 12, 13, &c.* for so doing, and sufficiently demonstrate, that these are not so Amiable in their Eyes as they ought to be, for which they deserve smartly to be *Reprov'd*.

2. *Secondly*, There are others to be *Reprov'd*, who altho' they frequent God's House, yet 'tis not upon the account of the *Amiability* thereof, but only upon some worldly carnal Motive, and design or other. As

1. Such who come only out of *Novelty* and *Curiosity*. 'Tis not any Delight, they take in the *House of God*, i. e. in the *Ordinances* which are there administred; but in that Variety of *Faces*, *Fashions*, or *Modes*, which they there see. Or with the *Wit*, *Tone*, or *Oratory* of the *Preacher*, which they there hear: Or with the surprizing *Stories*, or remarkable *Passages* of *History*, which they there observe; these may invite, and bring some thither, with some kind of Delight. But this is far from that *Spiritual Delight*, as all Christians ought to, and good

† *Sir Paul Ricaut's Hist. Ottom. Emp. p. 214.*

good Christians do, take therein; this is only *sensual, carnal, and sometimes Devilish*. For it gratifies but the *Body*, and touches only the Sences and superior Faculties; but the *Soul* in the mean time, is no way affected. 'Tis that Delight, in God's House, becomes a Christian, which is Spiritual and Divine; and ariseth from the sweet Enjoyment of God in his *Ordinances*. For this the devout *Soul* goes thither; and if he meets not his *God*, he finds but little Comfort there; no, he returns sad and afflicted, like a Person disappointed of what he most ardently desires.

This notwithstanding, what a strange *Athenian Humour*, is crept into the Hearts and Minds of our People, even in respect to the Concerns of Religion? They are altogether for *Novelty*; *for the hearing, or telling, some new thing in Divinity*. And this *Itch* is very catching; and spreads wide among us. Hence to hear a *New Preacher*, one they never heard or saw before, and know not whence he is or whether he goes, if he undertakes to bring them *any News out of the Gospel* (tho' like other *News* it be ever so *false*) they can be content to go *Miles* after him, and take any pains. What is it but this, which sets *People a gadding, and a madding*, after every *New Comex*? The true Reason is, because they have *itching Ears*: So the *Apostle* decides the matter, in that passage of his to *Timothy*, wherein he seems to *Prophesy* of this Age, and to give a Description of the *Separatists* of the present times; *A time will come* (faith he) *when they will not endure sound Doctrine; but after their own Lust, shall heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears*, 2 Tim. 4. 3.

A time will come — may we not say, and now is? — *when People won't endure sound Doctrine* — as now they won't; for sound Doctrine was never, with more prudent Zeal and profound Learning, enforced upon the Consciences of Christians, than now generally in their own *Parochial Assemblies* unto which they belong, and from which they fly; for they don't like those *Orthodox Teachers*, whom God and the Reform'd establish'd Church, are pleased to place over them. — *they must heap to themselves Teachers* — be their own *Carvers*, in the most weighty things; and what generally, they least understand — *after their own lusts* — which shall best gratifie their Humours and Fancies. But what's the true Reason of all this? — *having itching Ears*. This *itch* in the *Ear*, hath prov'd the *Scab of the Church*; Peoples delight, to have this *itch*, claw'd and gratified, (which can't be better done than by *New Teachers, and New Doctrines*) hath produced in a great measure, most of the *Divisions and Factions* which are among us.

But this is far from that *Principle*, which moves a good Christian to love and frequent the *House of God*. 'Tis only the *Amiableness* thereof;

thereof; those sweet *Ordinances* of the *Gospel* there celebrated, brings him thither; he comes, not to have the Ear tickled with empty Notions, but to feed his *Soul* with the *Bread of Life*. They then, who come out of *Novelty* and *Curiosity*, deserve a *Reproof* for so doing. And so the

2. Second place, Do they also who come only out of *Custom* and *Fashion*; This, to some, is the greatest Inducement they have; 'tis the *Mode* and *Fashion* of the Place where they live, for People to go to *Church* on *Sundays*; and 'twas the Practice of their Friends and Relations before them so to do, and they don't love to be singular; and not knowing well what to do with their time at home, while they are thus hinder'd from their *Worldly Business*, therefore they go too. This we may justly fear is the only *Motive* that brings many unto *God's House*; not any real Sweetness which they taste in that heavenly Banquet here dispensed, but only for *Fashion*.

Whereas they who sensibly taste of the Fatness of *God's House*, come for that real repast they find therein, beyond any other Place whatsoever. The Blessed *Ordinances* which are there solemnized, are the very Food of their Souls: And the Righteous come to them, not to fill their Eyes or Ears, but to satisfie the Appetite. As a Person goes to a *Feast*, not to descant or criticize upon the *Dishes* set before him but to eat, and feed himself. And the Pleasure and Satisfaction which the *Taste* administers make him come with Readiness and Clearfulness.

Now they who come to the *Ordinances*, celebrated in *God's House*, as they ought, taste a great Pleasantness in them. 'Tis no incongruous Expression, *O taste and see* (says David) *how gracious the Lord is*, Ps. 34. 8. God's Goodness may be tasted; and if we don't taste the Goodness of God in his *Ordinances*, 'tis a sad sign that our — *Sensorium* — that Faculty whereby we relish any thing, is lost or out of Order. Thus the *Author* to the *Hebrews* intimates, That we may *Taste the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come*, Heb. 6. 5. And if we taste of them, i. e. in a spiritual manner, the more we taste the more we shall delight therein. If not, 'tis an Argument People come only out of *Custom*; which ought to be reproved.

3. Some go not for the Amiablenes of *God's House*, but only for *Company* and *Complaisance*; to go with a *Friend* thither, or to meet a *Friend* there.

Thus to keep a *Friend* company, to shew him the way, that they maynt seem to neglect him, or the like, they will accompany him thither.

Or else to see, or meet, or speak with a *Friend* there, whom they have not seen of a good while, this often induces them to go to *Church*.

But

But I must plainly tell you, That if this be all your Motive, all your end in going thither, you were better stay at home; for 'tis a going unworthily. As there is *unworthy Receiving*, so there is *unworthy bearing*; and *unworthy praying*. And as the one is dangerous, so is the other also; *the Prayer of the wicked is an Abomination to the Lord*, says *Solomon*, Prov. 15. 8. so is his Hearing, so is his Communicating, so is all that he doth. If therefore they go thus, out of Company, 'tis because that and not the *House of God*, is *Amiable* in their Eyes; and so most deserving a *Reproof*.

4. *Fourthly and Lastly*, Some others go thither only upon *Prudential Reasons*, and *Worldly Policy*. Not because they are affected with the Beauty thereof; but to avoid *Censure*, *Reflection*, or the *Ill-will* of those, whose Favour, Business, or Employ, they depend upon.

Hheretofore indeed, many possibly came to avoid the *Penalty of the Law*: But now that is suspended, the more (I think) is the Pity. Not for that, any truly *tender Conscience* is eas'd; but because, when our *People* see, that if they go no whither, serve God no way, either in *Publick* or in *Private*, they shan't be *punished*, this makes many grow *Bold* in their *Profaneness*; and frequent no place of *God's Worship* at all: Which is a dreadful Evil, and deserves the *Animadversion* of the *Wisdom* of the Nation.

This indeed, is the true *Reason* of the general *thinness* of our *Congregations*: Not a desire Persons have to serve God, in any *seperate Meetings*; no, 'tis from no desire they have to serve God at all. As if they were like him, the *Prophet* speaks of, Dan. 11. 37. *That did not regard the God of his Fathers, nor any God*: But magnifie himself above all. So they; they don't regard the God of their Fathers; their *Fathers* way of worshipping and serving God, according to the rule of the *Reformed Church of England*; who were wont to be early, frequent, constant therein; that they regard not — *no nor any God* — They don't serve God at all, no God; any how, any way; but exhaust the whole *Lord's Day*, and consume it in Sloth, Smoke, Drink, or *Worldly Business*. As if they had *Souls* — *tantum pre sale* — only to keep their Bodies from stinking. Yet however, there is something they have instead of God, whose God is their *Interest*: And to promote that, and to curry favour, they may sometimes come to the *House of God*. Whereas, if you are *Men Pleasers* only, consider who hath spoken it, *Verily ye have your reward*, Mat. 6. 2.

Thus you see who they are, that deserve this severe Reprehension, they who don't delight in the *Lord's Tabernacle at all*: And they who come to it from an *Evil Principle*, or to an *Evil Purpose*.

And here we may make a brief Enquiry into the *Justness* of this *Reproof*, and shew whereupon it is grounded. Upon these Four following Considerations.

1. For that hereby they Dishonour God.
2. Disrespect themselves.
3. Disparage their Rightful Minister. And
4. Discourage their Neighbours.

They in whose Eyes the Tabernacle of God is not truly Amiable, are in some measure (at least) guilty of some, or other, or all these things: Which whosoever are so, are most justly Reproveable.

1. They who neglect, or contemn the House of God and the Place of his Publick Worship, dishonour God. They disappoint what in them lieth, the great end and design for which it was raised, viz. to be the place, where the Sacrifices of Prayers and Praises, may be duly and unanimously offered up to Almighty God, thro' our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to the Glory and Honour of his Holy Name.

Now we find, that good People's frequenting the House of God, and publickly paying him that Worship and Adoration they owe him, God is pleased to interpret this an Honouring of him; according to that of the Kingly Prophet, *whoso offereth me thanks and Praise, he honoureth me*, Ps. 50. v. ult. — *Qui sacrificiat Laudem* — He that offers me the Sacrifice of Praise, he honoureth me. Sacrifices were a Publick Worship of God: And the Sacrifices of Christians, Thanks and Praise, the more Publick they are, the more is God honoured by them. Which we may conclude to be the ground of Holy David's Exhortation, *Let them exalt him also in the Congregation of the People, and praise him in the Assembly of the Elders*, Ps. 107. 32. *That his ways may be known upon Earth, and his saving Health among all Nations.*

As a Person that reports any scandalous Story of another, the more he spreads it, the more he dishonours him: So he that declarereth the Praises of Almighty God, the more publickly and openly, and commonly he doth it, the more may he be said to honour him. Which indeed is one Reason, why the Publick Assemblies of his People are most acceptable to him; for that in them, his Praises are the greater, and there is a more open Manifestation thereof.

Whereby we see, not to frequent the House of God, not to encourage and promote his Praises there, in his Interpretation is a dishonouring of him. O! How greatly then, do many among us dishonour God? who slight and neglect the Place where his Honour dwells? who wilfully absent themselves from it days without number? who when they have ever so fair Invitations and Encouragements, shall not be prevailed upon to come? But let them consider what Truth hath spoken * — *Them that honour me I will honour, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed* * 1 Sam. 2.30.

2. Farther, Such may be said to *Disrespect themselves*. They who are not taken with the *Amiability* of God's House and *Ordinances*, as they ought, have not that true Love to themselves, they may seem to have.

Q. How? May some say, Have they not that true Love to themselves? Why! 'tis because they love *themselves* so well, that they love God's House so little; because they won't put themselves to the Labour and Trouble of going. For Answer,

A. This is not true, but a false and foolish Love; like theirs, who prefer the *Cabinet* before the *Jewel*, the *Ring* before the *Diamond*, the *Shell* before the *Kernel*. The *Body*, in Comparison to the *Soul*, is but a *Shell*, a *Husk*, a *Cabinet*; 'tis the *Soul* is the *Jewel* of inestimable Value, which ought especially to be preserved.

If People are therefore willing to secure their Temporal, with the Destruction of their Eternal Interest, to secure their present Ease, with the loss of their future Happiness, to reap Pleasures of a Moments Duration, with the Forfeiture of those which are at God's right Hand for evermore, can they be said to love themselves? Call you this Love? Do you look upon this as Wisdom? Beloved, those blessed Ordinances here administred, are intended for your highest and truest welfare; as was intimated before, they are appointed for the Nourishment of your Souls, in Grace and Faith; and they ought to be looked upon as your necessary Food; without which they must starve and perish. Now can that Person be said to love himself, or consult his own Welfare, that neglects his appointed Food? Who fasts away his *Stomach*, and pines himself to *Death*? Yet this is the case of the Generality of our People: Tho' the Word and Sacrament be that *heavenly food*, that *Manna* that came down from above, which alone can support and maintain the *Spiritual Life* in them, yet where are they, that do hunger and thirst after it? That will go but a few steps to the House of God, and take it in its Season? It may be justly fear'd, upon a due Enquiry, very few such may be found: Which rather argues the Cruelty of a Tyrant, than the Love of a Friend.

3. What farther justifies this *Reproof* is this, That such as do not Love, i. e. frequent God's Tabernacles, do greatly disparage the *Messengers* and *Ministers* of God belonging thereunto. They lessen them, and cause their Disesteem in the Opinion of the World; to leave them to preach, to a few *empty Seats* (and yet more sometimes perhaps than *Hearers*) or to *Read* the solemn *Prayers* of the Church, to a few *Stone Pillars*, what a Disparagement is this? For it makes the World suspect them to be deficient in Gifts, Parts, Morals, Learning, or some other thing (when all the while they may not be
so)

so) to see them thus neglected. Were they Wise Men, or Good Men, or Able Men, many are ready to say, their Flocks would not thus leave them ; their People would not thus forsake them ; thus is the World apt to censure.

But then this doth not always (indeed but seldom) hold true : For the most eminent for Learning, the most exemplary for Conversation, the most powerful for Doctrine, have oftentimes been forsaken by factious, proud, false-willed People. Our *Blessed Saviour* when he preached Life and Salvation in the World, was not liked by all. St. Peter that was so fervent in Spirit, St. Paul that was so powerful in Preaching (that 'twas one of the three things St. Austin desired to have seen, *Paul in the Pulpit*) and *Apollos*, that was so eloquent and mighty in the *Scriptures* †, had each of them some Hearers which did not like them ; as we find from that ^{† Act. 18. 24.} Passage of the *Apostle*, where he tells us, that the Christians at Corinth, some were for *Paul*, some for *Apollos*, some for *Cephas*, and some for *Christ*; all (it seems) were not for *Christ* himself. So that some of God's true and faithful Ministers and Messengers, may be forsaken by their People, be they ever so accomplished, be they ever so eminent whether for Parts or Piety.

Farther we know too, That many who are no way excellent, either for natural or acquired Parts, have little or no Learning, no Education, no Skill in the Tongues, no Knowledge in Philosophy, yet are flock'd after, are crowded, are had in Admiration, as if they were Angels descended from Heaven. Are cried up by their ignorant Admirers, are, *tantum non adored*, and commanded, and frequented, as if they were Apostles immediately sent from God. Whereas, 'tis sufficiently known, all the while, that many of them are ignorant, illiterate, uneducated Mechanicks ; and besides Tone, and Noise, there's nothing in them.

Now how much it is good Peoples Duty, to esteem and reverence the true *Messengers* of *Christ*, and *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, whom God, and his Church, hath placed over them, you may infer from that of the *Apostle*? 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. *We beseech you Brethren to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you ; and to esteem them very highly in Love for their Works sake.* Where you see, your *Ministers*, who are over you in the Lord, whom the Lord, in his gracious Providence, hath set over you, or who are over you in the things of the Lord, you ought to treat them with a reverential Love ; and esteem very highly of them, as the *Ambassadors* of *Christ*. So the same *Apostle* elsewhere *, Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double Honour, especially they who labour in Word and Do-

* Tim. 5. 17.

Erlne. And as you ought to reverence the true *Bishops* and *Presbyters* of the *Church*, so to beware how you credit and countenance, as such, those who are none; who *run before they are sent*, and presumptuously invade the *sacred Function*.

You therefore, who by your careless, wilful, profane absenting your selves from the *Tabernacle* of God to which you belong, to the Disparagement of your *Gospel Ministers*, ought to be reproved.

Lastly, They in whose Eyes God's *House*, his *Worship* and *Service* is not Amiable, do thereby greatly *discourage their Neighbours*; and discourage them too, in Matters of the highest and weightiest Consequence; which may at length issue in their *Eternal Ruin*.

'Tis the Duty, and it ought to be the Care of *Christians*, not to lay a *Snare* in their *Neighbours* way; but rather (as the *Apostle* exhorts) every one should *please his Neighbour, for his good to Edification*, Rom. 15. 2. promote the *Edification* of his *Neighbour* in *Virtue, Piety, and the Fear of God*, as much as in him is.

Now an ill *Example* is a *Snare*, and a very dangerous one too; such as but too many are taken in. For when you absent your selves and keep away from God's *Publick Worship* and *Service*, you thereby discourage your *Neighbour* from frequenting of it also. He is apt to think, 'tis no greater Sin in him to neglect *God's House*, than 'tis in you; if he sees you to do it, he thinks he may as safely do it also. Hence he grows *lukewarm*, and *indifferent* in this matter; and at length *stark cold*, down-right *profane*, despising and neglecting all the Duties of Religion. And this is owing much to your *Example*; the Badness whereof, hath prov'd this, or that Man, or perhaps many Men, their *Ruin, their Eternal Ruin*.

From all which serious Considerations, you see how very deserving, of a *sharp Reproof* they are, who have no true Love, nor Esteem, for the *Lord's Tabernacles*; which though it be highly Amiable, yet 'tis not so in their Eyes: And this shall suffice as to the *Third Inference*.

4. *Fourthly and Lastly*, This Place of Scripture may be farther useful yet — *περὶ πατέρων — For Instruction in Righteousness.* And that these two ways.

1. *First, By way of Examination.* And
2. *Secondly, By way of Exhortation.*

1. *First*, This may put you upon the *Tryal* and *Examination* of your selves, whether *God's Tabernacle*, the Place of his *Publick Worship*, be truly *Amiable* in your Eyes or no.

Some, I suppose, will be ready to look upon this Advice as needless and impertinent; pretending, they are sure that they *Love the Church* very well (for I am speaking to such now, as own some *Kindness to our Churches*) they are *Friends of the Church*; and are ready

ready to cry out, with those the Prophet mentions, *The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord!* So that at first hearing, one would conclude, That they were *the only true Lovers of the Church*. Yet upon a fair Tryal, upon a true Examination of things, it will be found, That they do not love the *Church*, and (whatever they say) 'tis not truly lovely in their Eyes; as may appear upon these following *Marks and Characters*.

1. Are you careful to keep the *House* and *Tabernacle of God* in good *Repair*, well cleansed from Filth, Rubbish, or any other Annoyance? 'Tis one of the express *Canons* of our *Church**,
That the *Wardens* shall take Care, That the *Church* be * Can. 85.
well and sufficiently repair'd; the Windows well glazed,
and the Floor kept paved, plain, and even; without Dust, or any thing
that may be noisome or unseemly, as becometh the House of God. The least and lowest degree of our Love to it, is to keep it sweet and clean, and handsome; as knowing, the God whom we there worship is the *God of Purity and Cleanness*; and we ought to find, or make it so, as an Argument of our Honour and Reverence to the God we serve.

This is a Matter, whatever any foolish or profane Person may think thereof, of that Nature and Consequence, That the *Fathers of our Reformation here in England*, have thought fit to compose an *Homily*, to be *Read in Churches*, For Repairing and keeping clean, and comely Adorning of *Churches*; that is the Title of it †. A few Passages whereof, for the greater Authority, of what I say, I shall here lay before you in the same Words.

† Book of
Hom. Tom. 2.
Hom. 3.

' It is a common custom used of all Men, when they intend to ' have their Friends and Neighbours come to their Hous-es, to eat or ' drink with them, or to treat or talk of any Matter, they will have ' their Hous-es (which they keep in continual Reparations) to be clean ' and fine; lest they should be accounted Sluttish, or little to regard ' their Friends and Neighbours. How much more then ought the ' House of God (which we call the *Church*) to be suffi- ' pair'd in all Places, and to be honourably adorn'd and garnish'd ' and to be kept clean and sweet, to the Comfort of the People, that ' shall resort thereunto. —

And then the Homily, having observ'd how K. *Joash* and K. *Josias* repaired the *Temple of God at Jerusalem*, proceeds to make these Inferences from thence. 1. That God is well pleased, that his People ' should have a convenient Place to resort unto, to praise his Holy ' Name. 2. He is highly pleased with all those, which diligently ' and zealously go about to amend and restore such Places as are ap- ' pointed for the Congregation of God's People to resort unto. 3. God was

' was sore displeased with his People, because they builded, decked,
 ' and trimmed up their own Hous-es, and suffer'd God's House to be
 ' in Ruin and Decay; to lie uncomely and fulsome. Wherefore God
 ' was sore grieved with them, and plagued them as appeareth in the
 ' Prophet Agg^e, Ch. i. v. 4, 5, 6. — By which it may evident-
 ' ly appear, that God will have his Temple, his Church, the Place
 ' where his Congregation shall resort, to be well maintain'd — And
 ' a little after thus it proceeds — The World thinketh it but a Tri-
 ' fle, to see their Church in Ruin and Decay; but whoso doth not
 ' lay to their helping hands, they sin against God and his Holy Con-
 ' gregation. It is Sin and Shame to see so many Churches, so rui-
 ' nous and so foully decayed, almost in every Corner. If a Man's
 ' private House wherein he dwelleth be decayed; he will never cease
 ' till it be restored again. Yea, if his Barn where he keepeth his
 ' Corn, be out of Reparations, what Diligence useth he to make it
 ' in perfect State again? If his Stable for his Horse, yea, the Sty'e
 ' for his Swine, be not able to hold out Water and Wind, how care-
 ' ful is he to do cost thereon? And shall we be so mindful of our
 ' common, base Houses, deputed to so vile Employment, and be forget-
 ' ful toward that House of God, wherein be intreated the Words of
 ' our Eternal Salvation? Wherein be ministred the Sacraments and
 ' Mysteries of our Redemption — — Thus our *Homily*.

I have been the larger in giving the serious Exhortation of our Church in this Affair, for the Seasonableness thereof; For that God's House is suffer'd to fall into such sad decay in many Places of the Kingdom, the Pavement much broken, funk, and uneven; Dust and Rubbish scatter'd up and down, very unseemly for the House of God. Is this your Love to God's *House*? Is it only thus *Amiable* in your Eyes? — *Pudet hec opprobria nobis* —

This certainly is a Shame, and a Reproach to Persons professing Godliness: And not only so, but a Sin too. A Sin that must be very offensive in the Eyes of God, who in his wise Providence, amidst all our late Fears, having established his *Reformed Worship* and *Service* among us, shall observe, that we take no Care, will be at no Charge to keep up, and adorn the place appointed for the Celebration thereof. Let not any esteem this so small a Matter; if God sees that we so neglect his House and Service, he may justly deprive us of both; and suffer *Superstition* and *Idolatry* to return upon us: *Which God forbid.* This is the first Mark.

2. You may try your Love to God's House farther, *By what you have given to it*; either towards the *Adorning* of it, or the furnishing it with such Utensils, as are fit and proper, for the better Celebration of God's *Worship* and *Service* therein. When God raised up, his

Tabernacle

Tabernacle in the Wilderness, he commanded that it should be adorn'd with great Cost and Curiosity. He was pleased himself to inspire *Bezaliel* and *Aboliab*, in Wisdom and in Understanding, and Knowledge, to devise curious Works; to work in Gold, and in Silver, and in Brads, in cutting Stones, and in carving of Wood, &c. as is expressed, *Exod. 35. 31. v.* and onward. And the People of God we find, were so very free in their Offerings of Gold, Silver, Precious Stones, Rich Hangings, and the like, towards the Adornment thereof, that *Moses* was forced to restrain their Liberality, by Publick Proclamation, *Exod. 36. 6.*

But then, if we descend to the times of Christianity, we find the Primitive Christians begrudg'd no Cost or Charges in building and adorning Churches for the Publick Worship and Service of God. They not only rais'd Noble Structures, but very richly adorn'd them; an Account whereof you had before.

Nor let any say, or think, That this was done only in the Days of Superstition. No; Constantine the Great, who built that noble Church call'd the *Martyrium* at Constantinople, lived long before Popery, and that sort of Superstition obtain'd in the World. And as he was the first, so he was the most pious Christian Prince recorded in History. Nor would I be thought to go about to vindicate the Practices of deluded People, in respect to their several Gifts and Offerings, which heretofore they superstitiously made, to the Images, Shrines, and Altars of Saints: Which amounted in some Churches here in England, to an immense Treasure of infinite Value. Such was that of *Thomas Becket*, in the Church of *Canterbury*:

* Speed's Hist.
of Great Brit.
in K. H. 8. p.
1026.

Of which the Historian gives this Account *, That the Shrine of Thomas Becket did abound with more than Princely Riches; whose meanest part was pure Gold, garnish'd with many precious Stones; and great Orient Pearls.

The spoil of which, when it was defaced in King Henry the VIII's days, in Gold and Jewels, fill'd two great Chests †; one of

† Weev. Fun.
Mon. p. 202.

which, six or eight strong Men could do no more, than convey out of the Church. Which Images and Shrines,

as they were abused, to Superstition and Idolatry, were so far from Adorning, that they did greatly pollute and defile the House of God. Wherefore by the Injunction of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, in the 1. Edw. VI. they were very justly ordered to be taken down and demolished;

|| Heyl. Hist. of
Reform. p. 36.
Injunct. 28.

so that no Memory of them was to remain in the Walls or Windows ||. But then the Church was not to be defaced, but carefully in the room thereof, to be adorn'd with several Texts of Holy Scripture in the English Tongue, as was noted before: Which is the ground of those

Sentences,

Sentences, we see written on the Walls of our Churches, now every where, too little regarded; as appears, for that in some Places they are clean wash'd out by Mens hands, and others, suffer'd to be obliterated by the Spunge of Time.

However therefore, this Practice may have been abused (as what hath not?) yet this should not discourage a prudent and pious Zeal herein. And People may still please God, and do him good Service, in Rebuilding, Repairing, and Adorning his *Houses* in the Land. As *Arch-Bishop Laud*, bestowed so much in the last Age, upon St. *Paul's London*, that Sir *Edward Deering*, his professed Adversary, said thus of him, *That wheresoever his Grave should be, Paul's would be his perpetual Monument, and his Book against Fisher the Jesuit, his Epitaph* *.

* Ath. Ox. v. 2. p. 31. Nor are we destitute of eminent Examples to this purpose, in the present Age: Not only in respect to *London*, where they have Rebuilt their *Churches*, destroyed by that Dreadful Fire, 1666. in a very beautiful manner, and St. *Paul's* very gloriously (unto which an Honourable Gentlewoman, born in this Parish of *Berry-Pomeroy*, gave a Thousand Pounds) but in the Country also. Where the same Noble Lady, *Mistress Dorothy Seymour*, gave to the Parish-Church of *Berry-Pomeroy* aforesaid, a very fair *Altar-Piece*, with a New Communion-Table, a rich Carpet to cover it, carv'd or turn'd Rails to enclose it, a large gilded Chalice, with other things of Value; and also new laid the Floor of the Chancel throughout with squared Stones. We have another Example of a like Piety, in *Totnes* near adjoining; where Mr. *Richard Langdon*, Merchant, hath given lately an Hundred Pounds, in double-gilt Plate, for the Communion Service of that Church, and a rich Crimson Velvet Carpet, with deep Gold Fringe for the Communion-Table there. The like whereunto near to the same Value, was done for the Parish-Church of *Dartmouth* in this County, by *William Hayne*, Esq; lately deceased.

These things I mention, not only for an Honourable Record, of the Memories of those pious and worthy Persons, but also for the Example and Encouragement herein of others; especially such as are of Quality and Ability to do the same. For the truth is, the Lord's Table is so ill furnished generally, in our Country-Churches, with proper Utensils, that we are enforced to serve him in Pewter, which methinks, they who would scorn to be serv'd in such Vessels at their own Tables, should disdain to see God, and themselves too, serv'd in them, at the Lord's Table. This can't but be a Reproach to those, who can glory, in rich Cup-boards of Plate, in their own Houses, yet care not how meanly God is served in his.

This

This then will remain, as one certain *Character* whereby to distinguish your Love to the *House* or *Tabernacle* of God, the *Gifts* you bestow upon the *Beautifying* and *Adorning* of it.

3. You may farther *try* your Love to God's *House*, by examining your selves (if you have done it no good) whether you have done it no wrong; whether you have not taken, or kept away, any thing which belongs to the *Church*; which the *Piety* of your *Fore-fathers*, and the *Goodness* of God hath bestowed and settled upon it.

This may be thought a nice and tender Sore; however, by a faithful hand, it ought to be searched to the bottom, in order to a thorough Cure.

Tithes and *Offerings* were fo settled by God upon *himself*, in the *Priests* and *Levites* under the Land, that when the People detained, or with-held them, he complains that they had *Robbed him*: *Ye have Robbed me*, says God. *Wherein*, say they? *In Tithes and Offerings*, *Mal. 3. 8.* Well, what follows? Do they escape so? No; look on to the next v. and see — *Ye are cursed with a Curse*; for ye have *Robbed me*, even this whole Nation.

Now what was the ground of Peoples Payment of *Tithes* under the *Law*? That seems *Moral* and *perpetual*, viz. the upholding and maintaining *God's true Worship and Service*. So that under the *Law* it can't be denied, but that *Tithes* were — *Fure divino* — due.

Well then, Why ought they not to be held so still, under the *Gospel*? Do we any where find, that they are any way *abrogated*, by our *Blessed Saviour* or his *Apostles*, as the *Ceremonial Law* was? When St. Paul reckons up several *Jewish Rites* and *Ceremonies*, that were abolished by our *Saviour's* coming, as *Meats* and *Drinks*, and *Holy-days*, and *Sabbath-days*, in the *2 Col. 16*. We don't find *Tithes* mentioned as any of them.

Nay, rather, we find they are continued and confirmed by *Christ* and his *Apostles*: So our *Saviour*, when he sent out the *seventy Disciples* to *Preach the Gospel*, he encourages them to take something for their pains; *Eat and drink such things as they give*: for the *Labourer is worthy of his Hire*, *Luke 10. 7.* The *things that they give*— Some perhaps, may be encourag'd hence to say, that *Ministers of the Gospel* ought to take no more, than what good People willingly *give them*. I wholly deny this Interpretation; nor is there one word of *giving* in the *Original*; as if what they received was a Matter of *meer Charity*. The Words are these — ταῦτα ἀνταῦτα — *Que ipsorum, sive apud ipsum sunt; ipsorum bona.* So the Critic †. *Eating and drinking, those things that are theirs; taking* ^{† Pol. Crit. in part of what they have, viz. of their good things; and Loc.} *that for this Reason — The Labourer is worthy of his Hire.* He that

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This then will remain, as one certain *Character* whereby to distinguish your Love to the *House* or *Tabernacle* of God, the *Gifts* you bestow upon the *Beautifying* and *Adorning* of it.

3. You may farther *try* your Love to God's *House*, by examining your selves (if you have done it no good) *whether you have done it no wrong*; whether you have not taken, or kept away, any thing which belongs to the *Church*; which the *Piety* of your *Fore-fathers*, and the *Goodness* of God hath bestowed and settled upon it.

This may be thought a nice and tender Sore; however, by a faithful hand, it ought to be searched to the bottom, in order to a thorough Cure.

Tithes and *Offerings* were fo settled by God upon *himself*, in the *Priests* and *Levites* under the Land, that when the People detained, or with-held them, he complains that they had *Robbed him*: *Ye have Robbed me*, says God. *Wherein*, say they? *In Tithes and Offerings*, *Mal. 3. 8.* Well, what follows? Do they escape so? No; look on to the next v. and see — *Ye are cursed with a Curse*; for ye have *Robbed me*, even this whole Nation.

Now what was the ground of Peoples Payment of *Tithes* under the *Law*? That seems *Moral* and *perpetual*, viz. the upholding and maintaining *God's true Worship and Service*. So that under the *Law* it can't be denied, but that *Tithes* were — *Jure divino* — due.

Well then, Why ought they not to be held so still, under the *Gospel*? Do we any where find, that they are any way *abrogated*, by our *Blessed Saviour* or his *Apostles*, as the *Ceremonial Law* was? When St. Paul reckons up several *Jewish Rites* and *Ceremonies*, that were abolished by our *Saviour's* coming, as *Meats* and *Drinks*, and *Holy-days*, and *Sabbath-days*, in the *2 Col. 16*. We don't find *Tithes* mentioned as any of them.

Nay, rather, we find they are continued and confirmed by *Christ* and his *Apostles*: So our *Saviour*, when he sent out the *seventy Disciples* to *Preach* the *Gospel*, he encourages them to take something for their pains; *Eat and drink such things as they give: for the Labourer is worthy of his Hire*, *Luke 10. 7.* The *things that they give*— Some perhaps, may be encourag'd hence to say, that *Ministers* of the *Gospel* ought to take no more, than what good People willingly *give them*. I wholly deny this Interpretation; nor is there one word of *giving* in the *Original*; as if what they received was a Matter of *meer Charity*. The Words are these — *ταῦτας ἀνταντάς — Que ipsorum, sive apud ipsos sunt; ipsorum Bona.* So the Critic †. *Eating and drinking, those things that are theirs; taking* ^{† Pol. Crit. in Loc.} *part of what they have*, viz. of their *good things*; and that for this Reason — *The Labourer is worthy of his Hire.* He that

that worketh hath a right to his Wages; 'tis his proper due; and he that detains it, sins in a high Measure. Nor can the *Labourer* be said to live of *Charity*, but by what properly is his own, and belongs to him. That our *Saviour*, by this *Hire*, intends no less than the *Tithe*, we may infer from that of St. Paul, 1 Cor. 9. 13, 14. v. *Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the Temple? and they which wait at the Altar, are Partakers with the Altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.* Where is not only a very competent Maintenance established upon *Gospel Ministers*, but also the kind of it, that it shall be by *Tithes* and *Offerings*; as we may infer if we once more consider the Circumstances—*even so hath the Lord—where you see who hath ordain'd—the Lord—And what he hath ordain'd—That they that preach the Gospel shall live of the Gospel—But how? after a precarious or sordid manner? No, but as the *Priests* did under the *Law*, as they did that serv'd the *Temple*, and waited at the *Altar*—*Even so*, saith the *Apostle*, i. e. by *Tithes* and *Offerings* at least.*

See also that of the *Apostle* else where, Gal. 6. 6. *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things.* Where you see, that a Christian hath nothing that is *communicable*, as the *Fruits* of his *Field*, the *increase* of his *Cattle*, and the like, but he ought to *communicate* some part of it. *To whom? To him that teacheth him in the word.* So that something, you see, of every thing is *their Due*. The great matter is, to know precisely how much. Why truly, the Piety of Christians ought to be such, as to see that it be not less than the *Tenth*. For what were this, but to undervalue the *Gospel* of *Christ*, and to set it beneath the *Law*? Whereas the *Gospel* is a far more glorious Dispensation, according to that of the *Apostle*, 2 Cor. 3. 7, 8, 9. *If the Ministrations of Condemnation be Glory, much more doth the Ministrations of Righteousness exceed in Glory.* Under the *Law* the *Priest's Office* lay much in killing, and dressing, and offering up *Bullocks* and *Goats*: The *Priests* under the *Gospel*, they offer up to God — *vitulos Labiorum — the Calves of their Lips.* Under the *Law* they sacrificed *Kids* and *Lambs*; under the *Gospel*, we offer up the *Sacrifice of Praise* and ^{* Heb. 13. 15.} *Thanksgiving* *. So that tho' the *Mode* of God's Service be alter'd, and chang'd, from what 'twas under the *Law*, the *substance* of it still remains. Which consider'd, none can shew a sufficient Reason, why the *Gospel Ministrations* should not be so highly *encourag'd* and *rewarded*, as those of the *Law* were. We find the *Primitive Christians*, were of a far different Temper from the present Age, who were not only content to give the *Tithe* of what they had, for propagating the *Gospel*, but sold all they had:

And

And laid it down at the *Apostle's Feet* †. So that you here may see (at least in part) what *Gospel-Right Ministers* of the *Gospel* have to *Tithes*: Which are also confirmed to them, by the *Laws of our Country*. So that what right any one hath from the *Law* to his *Goods*, the same have *Ministers* to their *Tithes*.

Q. But you will say, in many Places of the Kingdom, they are *Alienated* from the *Church*: If they are, as you seem to make them, so — *jure divino* due, how comes that about?

A. For Answer, We know it to be too true by sad Experience; but that they are so, hath occasioned no small *Reflection* on the *Popish Parliament* (for such it was) in K. *Henry the VIII's** Days, who did it. For as the *Pope* before had taken away the *Tithes* from many *Parish Churches*, and settled them upon *Abbies* and *Convents*, They upon the *Dissolution* of those *Houses*, with as much right, gave them to the *King*. Who scatter'd them abroad, some by *Gift*, some by *Sale*, into *Laymens hands*; in which (to the *Dishonour of the Reformation*) they have generally ever since continued. For as our Protestant Princes and Prelates, and Commons of the Realm, Reform'd the *Church* of other pieces of *Popery*, so had they done well to have done this also. But then, if they who then gave them away, had no just Right to them, if they were settled before — *jure divino* on it — of Equity and Conscience they belong to the *Church* still; and they that thus have them, may do well also to refund them.

That *Tithes* (which are relative due, and become *payable* by the Law of God, only upon the Score of performing *Religious Offices* for them) nay, that *Easter-Duties*, *Womens-Churchings*, and other *Surplusage-Fees*, (as in many Places they are challeng'd) should fall into *Lay-Hands*, that do no *distinguishable good with them*, nor *for them*, is very strange; and remains as a *Blot* upon the *Reformation*†. So true is that which a Learned Author of the last Age observ'd, in a Discourse he dedicated to King *James I.* (worthy of the Perusal, in this case, of all *Lawyers* as well as *Divines*) ‘ Some may say, had we lived in those Days, no doubt we should not have done as our Predecessors did: ‘ But (says he) hereby are we *Witnesses* against our selves, that we are the Successors of them that did such things. We have indeed divided the Sin with them; they were the Robbers, and we are the Receivers; they took from the *Church*, and we enjoy it. *They take away the Sheaf from the hungry*, Job. 24. 10.

* A. R. R.
H. 8. 31°. cap.
13.

† Dr. Ryve's
Poor Vicar's
Plea, p. 151.

To bring this Discourse a little nearer home to your selves and your own Case; where *Tithes* are still payable to those *Ministers* of

the Gospel, that labour among you, in *Word* and *Doctrine*, you may do well, to examine your Consciences how you discharge this Duty: Don't People make it their Busines in laying them out, to shuffle and cut, and defalk them as much as they can? Or if they agree, don't they labour to impose upon the Ignorance or necessity of their *Ministers* herein? bringing them to compound for much less than the real *intrinsick Value*? Don't they insist upon *unjust, unreasonable Customes* and *Prescriptions*? And tho' begun under *Papery*, don't they endeavour to keep them up still, even under the *Reformation*? Not considering also, that tho' there might be some ground for the Payment of so little then, that there is none now. A *Penny* then, was more than the Value of a *Shilling* now. And what? Are you willing to have that for a *Penny*, which is now really worth a *Shilling*? And would yield so much, if duly paid? Where is the *Equity* or *Conscience* of this Proceeding? To pretend *Custom* in an evil Matter, is no justifiable Excuse; *evil Customes*, how profitable soever, ought to be broken. The reason and ground of the *Custom* being chang'd, the *Custom*, in *Equity* and *Conscience*, ought to be so too. This Religion and Christianity obliges to. But then, here I shall crave leave to speak a Word or two, to those who come not under the Obligation of *Predial Tithes* (i.e. Corn, Grafs, Lambs, and the like) as having nothing of this kind to pay, whether they are not obliged to pay something to God's Tabernacle, and those who serve therein? i.e. *Merchants, Shop-keepers, Artificers, and other Tradesmen*, and what they are oblig'd to pay.

That they are oblig'd to *pay something*, in *Foro Conscientiae* — in the *Court of Conscience*, if not in *Foro humano* — the *Court of Man*, is plain. For that if we minister to you in Spiritual things, 'tis but

just we should partake of your carnal things *: And if

* Rom. 15.27. there were no *Law of Man* that did require it, the *Law of Reason* and *Equity* doth oblige to it. For if People enjoy the *Fruit* of their *Minister's Labours*, 'tis but just, that their *Ministers* should partake of theirs: And that they should fetch *Supplies* from their *Shops* or *Stores* to sustain their Temporal Necessities, as well as they do from our *Churches* fetch the Supply of their Spiritual wants. Yet where are those, who tho' they constantly partake of our *Ministry*, do yet contribute to the Supply of our Necessities, to the Value of *Six pence a Year*? Which indeed is a great Shame to those that are guilty herein, and a great piece of *Impiety* as well as *Injustice*, that is fit to be reformed by a *Law*.

¶Sir Sim. Degg's
Parl. Couns. p.
2. c. 22. But then upon Examination, 'twill be found, That even these People also fall under the Obligation hereunto of the *Canons of the Church*. which require, That every

every one should pay for a Personal Tithe, a Tenth part of all his clear Gains, of what Employment or Occupation soever. Nor doth the Canon-Law only oblige hereunto, but there was a Statute made A^o. 2. Edw. VI. [†] That every person exercising, bar- ^{+ vid. Pult.} Stat.
gaining and selling, cloathing, handicraft, or other Art or Faculty, that had been accustomed to pay Personal Tithes within Forty Years last past, should yearly pay the Tenth part of his clear gains. And it might be well, if the Wisdom and Piety of the Nation, should be pleased to revive this *Act*, That those Persons amongs us, who (tho' of sufficient Ability) now pay nothing towards the Encouragement of the Gospel and Church of God in those Parishes whereunto they belong, might be compell'd thereunto.

But then for those *Dues* which the Law still obliges all unto, of *Easter-offerings*, tho' so very small as that they are hardly worth the Charge of collecting in some places; yet how unwillingly do People pay them, that pay nothing else? Where is their *Conscience*? Where is their *Religion*? Their *Love* to the *House of God*, all this while? If the King and Parliament shall be pleased, out of *Zeal* to the *Church of God*, to advance those *Easter-Offerings* of 2d. for every *Communicable Person* in a *Parish*, to the Proportion that 2d. did bear, (when this Payment became first due) to what it bears now, which is at least a Shilling for a Penny, upon those only who now pay little or no *Tithes*, and yet are of *Ability* so to do, what *harm* would there be done hereby, to any? And what *Good*, (especially in great *Towns*, where is generally the most *Labour* but the least *Reward*) would hence arise, to the Encouragement of the *Orthodox* and *Established Ministers* of the *Gospel* there? The thing is so very fair, and so little Burdensome, duly considered, that if our *Parliaments* should at any time please to have this Matter laid before them, I should not despair of seeing some happy Success herein.

Now however any may reflect upon this, as an *Avaritious Project*, for our own *Interest* (as I am sure none but they who are Avaritious themselves will) yet in this I may profess with St. Paul to his *Philippians* — *I speak not in respect of a Gift, but in respect of Fruit which may abound to your account*, Phil. 4. 17. For I would have *This*, to be in you (as becometh Christians) a Matter of *Faith* and not of *Necessity*. A true *Fruit* of your *Belief* of the *Gospel*; that you are truly serious in your *Profession* thereof, which is plain you value very little, if you are willing to give nothing for it. And therefore, until you do so, and use more *Conscience* in these Matters, make no more vain Pretences, *That you are Church-men; that you love the Church; that God's Tabernacle is Amiable in your Eyes*: These are but *Word, and Words but Wind*. But not to prosecute these chargeable

able Notes and Characters, of your Love to God's House, any farther. I proceed in the

Last place, to one distinguishing Note more, of the Amiability of God's House in your Eyes, *Do you come to it as you ought? Do you attend it duly, as God, and Conscience, and the Church obliges you to?* If not, let your Pretences and Boastings be what they will, you may conclude, you do not truly love it.

We can neglect any other Busines, or be at any pains, to come to that Place and Company we greatly value : And this an Argument of our love to it. Whereas, if we neglect, shun, or avoid them all we can, this is a plain Evidence, that true Love is wanting.

How can any say (as every one is ready to do) *That they love the House, and the Ordinances of God, that they are lovely and beautiful in their Eyes, and yet take no care to come to 'em? or to be in the place where they are perform'd?* You may therefore conclude upon this, as an undoubted Truth, That when the House and Ordinances of God are truly Amiable in your Eyes, you will be careful to attend upon them, according to these Three several Circumstances, 1. *Early.* 2. *Constantly.* 3. *Joyfully.*

1. *First,* You will attend them *Early*; that is, you will endeavour to come betime, to the very beginning of that Worship and Service, which is there performed. What we greatly affect, or long for, we

don't think we can come to it too soon. You that have earnest Busines thither, will chuse to go *betimes* to a Fair or Market, you will make it your endeavour to be there in Season *. When you have the same Value for God's House, you have for either of them, you will

be no less careful to be there betimes also.

Thus we have Holy David calling upon his Glory, and upon his Psaltery, and Harp to awake: And says he, *I my self will awake right early, Ps. 57. 8.* Why? what to do? Not to follow or prosecute the World, or any Gratifications thereof; but it was to celebrate God's Publick Praises, in the Congregation of his People; as you see v. 9. *I will praise thee, O Lord, among the People; I will sing unto thee among the Nations.* Of all other times, would good David chuse to *awake early*, on those Days especially, wherein God's Publick Worship and Service was to be celebrated. And this indeed hath been, and still is, the Practice of People fearing God, to awake and arise sooner upon the *Lord's Day*, than any other Day; that they may dispatch and put out of the way betimes all necessary Affairs: that so they may come the earlier to *God's House and Worship*. Thus Christ calls upon his Spouse the Church, *Cant. 7. 12.* *Let us get up early to the Vineyard; let us see if the Vine flourish; whether the tender*

* This was
preached to a
Country Audi-
tory.

tender Grape appear. His *House* is (as it were) God's *Vineyard*; whether he repairs early, to see how his *Vine* the *Church*, i. e. *Believers*, faithful and true Christians, how they flourish and grow in Grace and Holiness.

If Persons can be so early up, to follow the Concerns of this World (short and uncertain as they are) should not Christians be at least so early up, especially upon the *Lord's Day*, to secure the Joys and Glories of the next, which are full and permanent. *Demosthenes* hearing his Neighbour early up, to follow some sordid Mechanick Trade, blush'd to find himself abed, that had Nobler Studies to pursue. How well might Christians check themselves herein, to see how early People are up to serve the World, and how late they themselves are to serve God and their own Souls? That of *Horace*, may be well applied, to correct the Laziness and Back-^{† Epist.}wardness of People herein. † *Ut jugulent Homines sur-*
gunt de nocte Latrones: ut te ipsum serves, non expurgisceres — Thieves and Cut-throats can rise at Midnight to kill and steal: And can't you awake to preserve and defend your selves?

By your early Attendance upon God's House, you may give some Demonstration of your Love to it: When you chuse, and make it your Busines to come betime, and at the *very beginning* of God's Worship and Service. And truly 'tis sad and strange, to observe how very late many seem to desire and design to come. Whereas did they understand their *Duty*, and their *Interest* better, they would be sure to come at the *very beginning*. For if they come to the *Confession* of their *Sins*, then may they comfortably partake of the *Absolution*, there *ministerially pronounced* by the *Priest*. Then may they hear the Word of God *Preached* to 'em in the *Reading* of the *Holy Scriptures*. For the *Ministers* *Reading* of the *Holy Scriptures*, is *Preaching*; according to that of the *Apostle*; *Moses* of old time, hath in every City *them that Preach him, being Read in the Synagogues every Sabbath Day*, A&E. 15. 21. And then may they join in, and have the Benefit of, those pious and good *Prayers*, appointed to be devoutly lifted up, to Almighty God in the *Congregation*. Insomuch, when we consider it, 'twill appear strange, People should come so tardy and late, to what is at once their *Duty* and their *Intrest*.

However, if this be a distinguishing *Mark* of your Love to God's House, there are very few who upon Examination, will be found to own it.

2. Such as truly love the Tabernacles of God will attend them *constantly*, i. e. They will take all *just* and *due* Opportunities for the doing of it: For attending upon God's *Tabernacles*, the Places which are *consecrated* and *dedicated* to the peculiar Worship and Service of God.

God. Thither will they go; and to chuse unto that particular Tabernacle, which they belong to. If the Prayers of the Church be there devoutly Read; the Word of God faithfully Preach'd, and the Holy Sacraments, rightly Administred, thither will all they (that truly love the House of God) repair, and that constantly upon all Occasions.

When our People therefore, shall come only sometimes, and shall attend upon God's Ordinances there celebrated, only when they are at Leisure, when the Weather is fair, and they have nothing else to do at home, this is a sad sign, that there something elie sways and moves them besides Love and Conscience. But when we see you to come duely, and constantly, thro' all Discouragements of way, or Weather, or Business, to God's House and Worship, then may we conclude, you are moved by a Principle of Love, and Conscience; and that you do thus, because the Tabernacle of God is amiable in your Eyes. And verily, to attend constantly upon God's Publick Ordinances, dispens'd duely in his own House, is so much every good Christian's Duty, that nothing under an *absolute Necessity*, or a *great Charity*, should hinder you from it; as knowing that nothing else at last, will excuse your neglect herein. 'Tis expected (at least in these Parts) that Ministers should attend constantly, Forenoon and Afternoon (altho' they catechize also) upon Preaching of the Word, as well as Prayers. And if upon any occasion, they fail but once, there is murmuring enough: And often by none more, than by those that least frequent those Duties. 'Tis therefore just, we should expect, and have, your constant Attendance, both Forenoon and After, on Prayers and Preaching, and other Christian Duties.

Some there are, who if they come to the Publick Service of God in the Forenoon, make no scruple of absenting themselves from it in

* Act of Uniformity. A.C. 14. K. Charles II. the Afternoon. As if the same Law of Man *, as well as the Law of God, did not as well enjoyn the Evening, as the Morning Service. They are both equally required, and Authenticated by the very same Sanction, as well Humane as Divine. We may wonder therefore, how they who pretend some Zeal for Conformity and the established Service, can answer their own Consciences, in a wilful neglect of either part of the Day.

3. Such as love God's Tabernacles, will attend them *with joy and delight*. Thus David calls upon the Godly, to approach the Presence of God with Gladness and with Joyfulness, Ps. 95. 1, 2. *O come let us sing unto the Lord: Let us heartily rejoice, in the strength of our Salvation: Let us come before his Presence with Thanksgiving: and shew our selves glad in him with Psalms.* As God loves a *cheerful Giver*,

Giver, so he loves a cheerful Worshipper. I was glad (says the Psalmist) when they said unto me, Let us go unto the House of the Lord, Ps. 122. 1. If at any time, he might be slack or forgetful herein (as who is there but may?) He was glad to be put in mind of his Duty, and to be call'd upon to perform it. Quite contrary to the Temper and Humour of many among us, who are Angry and Displeas'd, when they are admonish'd in thcse Matters. And instead of being glad thereof, as they ought and would be, if they were of David's Spirit, are rather grieved and troubled at it. This Temper and Disposition whenever found (and ye your selves best know who are guilty of it) is a fearful sign, that God's House is not truly Amiable in your Eyes. What we love, we attend with Gladness, when People go to the Tabernacles of the Lord, as Malefactors go to the House of Correction, or the Place of Execution, with a Reluctancy and Unwillingness, 'tis very plain they take no delight in being there. And if they are not delighted with the House and Ordinances of God, they may be sure they will do them but little good. Then doth a Person's Food nourish, and strengthen him, when he takes it with Delight and Appetite: For what is eaten against Stomach, usually converts into Surfeit and Disease. How have you thus learned Christ, to follow the Captain of your Salvation fighting? 'Twas a true Remark of him that said — Non decet Militem, Imperatorem sequi, gementem — It does not become a Soldier to follow his General sobbing.

Holy David tells us, That he would delight himself in God's Statutes, Ps. 119. 10. — *I will delight my self in thy Statutes: I will not forget thy Word.* So likewise at the 47. v. of the same Psalm — *I will delight my self in thy Commandment, which I have loved.* Here you see the reason whence David came to delight in God's Commandments: Love is the ground of Delight: 'twas because he loved them; what we love ('tis plain) we delight in it. So that the ground of Peoples Aversion to God's House, and their Backwardness in attending upon his Ordinances, is for that they neither love them, nor delight in them. If they did, truly and sincerely, it would be their Grief and Sorrow, when they are hindered, kept back, or disappointed herein.

Hindrance and Disappointment, in what we greatly desire and earnestly long for, greatly afflicts and troubles us. And our Affliction upon this account, bears Proportion to the Greatness of our Expectation. If that be intense and vehement, so is the Trouble of your Frustration. Now this, to all true Christians, is most verified when they are impeded or disappointed in any Spiritual Concern of theirs: When any thing, unthought of, intervenes, which proves an Hindrance to 'em in their going to God's House, and the Enjoyment

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for. A. C. 14.
K. Charles II.

Giver, so he loves a *cheerful Worshipper*. I was glad (says the *Psal-mist*) when they said unto me, *Let us go unto the House of the Lord*, Ps. 122. 1. If at any time, he might be slack or forgetful herein (as who is there but may?) He was glad to be put in mind of his Duty, and to be call'd upon to perform it. Quite contrary to the Temper and Humour of many among us, who are *Angry* and *Displeas'd*, when they are admonish'd in thcse Matters. And instead of being glad thereof, as they ought and would be, if they were of *David's Spirit*, are rather grieved and troubled at it. This Temper and Disposition whenever found (and ye your selves best know who are guilty of it) is a fearful sign, that God's House is not truly Amiable in your Eyes. What we love, we attend with *Gladnes*, when People go to the *Tabernacles of the Lord*, as *Malefactors* go to the House of *Corre~~ction~~*, or the Place of *Execution*, with a Reluctancy and *Unwillingness*, 'tis very plain they take no delight in being there. And if they are not delighted with the House and Ordinances of God, they may be sure they will do them but little good. Then doth a Person's Food nourish, and strengthen him, when he takes it with Delight and App-e-tite: For what is eaten against *Stomach*, usually converts into *Sur-feit* and *Disease*. How have you thus learned Christ, to follow the *Captain of your Salvation* fighing? 'Twas a true Remark of him that said — *Non decet Militem, Imperatorem sequi, gementem* — It does not become a Soldier to follow his General sobbing.

Holy *David* tells us, That he would *delight himself* in God's Sta-tutes, Ps. 119. 10. — *I will delight my self in thy Statutes: I will not forget thy Word.* So likewise at the 47. v. of the same Psalm — *I will delight my self in thy Commandment, which I have loved.* Here you see the reaſon whence *David* came to delight in God's Com-mandments: *Love is the ground of Delight*: 'twas because he loved them; what we love ('tis plain) we delight in it. So that the ground of Peoples Aversion to God's *House*, and their Backwardness in attending upon his *Ordinances*, is for that they neither love them, nor delight in them. If they did, truly and sincerely, it would be their Grief and Sorrow, when they are hindered, kept back, or dis-ap-pointed herein.

Hindrance and Disappointment, in what we greatly desire and earnestly long for, greatly afflicts and troubles us. And our Affi-ction upon this account, bears Proportion to the Greatness of our Expe~~c~~tion. If that be intense and vehement, so is the Trouble of your Frustration. Now this, to all true Christians, is most verified when they are impeded or disappointed in any Spiritual Concern of theirs: When any thing, unthought of, intervenes, which proves an Hindrance to 'em in their going to God's *House*, and the Enjoyment

of him in his *Publick Ordinances*. There's nothing (they are resolv'd) under a kind of an absolute Necessity that shall hinder them: The World or the Affairs thereof that *shan't*: *Company* or *Society*, be it ever so great, that *shan't*: The *Way* or *Weather*, be it ever so long or foul, that *shan't* neither.

And yet sometimes, there may be something or other happen, which may hinder a good Christian in his strongest Resolutions; as Sicknes (his own or some of his Family) may do it: or some fig-
nal Act of a necessary Charity, may call him away. But if it doth so at any time, it proves a Trouble and Grief to him: not so much upon any Worldly Consideration, as that he is disappointed in his ardent Desires of enjoying God in his *Sanctuary*. So that tho' he is absent in Body, he will be present in Mind: His Heart and his Soul are there. Which is quite contrary to the Men of the World: Whose *Hearts* are *absent* from the Church, when their *Bodies* may be *present*. When they come to God's *Tabernacles* (which is but seldom) they leave their Souls at home: Or at least, they send them back to roam and wander after those dear Enjoyments they have left behind, long before the *Service* is over and the *Sermon* ended.

You may, by this *Character*, come in a great measure to distinguish your Love to the House of God, and the *Publick Offices* of Religion. Is it thus with you? Do you *long*, even *faint* with desire, as *David* professes he did in the *v.* after my *Text, for the Courts of the Lord?* Are you grieved? Are you troubled when you are disappointed? Tho' you incur no Worldly Loss, or Censure, is it your Sorrow that you can't be there more, that you can't be there always? If so, this is an Argument indeed, an evident Demonstration, that the *Tabernacles of God* are *amiable* in your Eyes.

But alas! this is far from being the Disposition of the Generality of our People! nay, who, or where is that Man or Woman that is of this truly Religious, Christian Frame and Temper? No: quite contrary, we see many pretend *Business* when they have none. Or they undertake the *Business* they may let alone to another time. Or they are so nice, if the *Way* or *Weather* be a little fouler than ordinary, that they think *that* a sufficient Hindrance; when that *shan't* hinder them from their Worldly *Business*, though a great deal fouler or a great deal farther. And they are so far from being griev'd or troubled to be disappointed herein, that they seem glad if any thing happens on the Lord's Day, which may look as a tolerable Excuse for their not coming to the Lord's House. Thus, if you try your selves faithfully by these *Marks* and *Characters*, you will come to see, whether God's *Tabernacles* be *Amiable* in your Eyes or no. From which I proceed

2. To the Second Branch of the Use, which is for *Exhortation*. What I would therefore from hence *exhort* you to, as your principal Duty is this, That you endeavour to get your Hearts deeply affected with that singular Loveliness and Beauty, which is and may be found in God's House. Not so much in the *Material Fabrick*, how richly or costly soever set forth (though even that ought to be *venerable* in our Eyes) as for the holy solemn *Worship* and *Service* of *Almighty God* therein perform'd: Those Blessed *Ordinances* of the *Gospel*, which are duly administred in it, for the *Peace*, *Comfort*, and *Salvation* of your precious Souls. For this reason, and upon this Account, it ought to be lovely in your Sight above any other House or Place whatsoever; because it belongs to God, and has been consecrated to his Honour, and to his Service, and is become the Earthly *Palace* of the Heavenly King, called in my *Text* the *Lord of Hosts*.

The great occasion why the House of God is no more beloved, is because our People are no better convinced of the Amiableness of it. If so, 'tis impossible but they must love it. No one can refrain loving what is truly lovely, unless he be blind in Mind, or Body, or both. Entertain therefore in your hearts, a deep Sence of the Beauty of God's Tabernacle: Let it not be so esteemed (as many are found to do) in Word only, but in Deed and in Truth; pass not upon it a few formal Complements, but let it have a Place in your sincere Affection and Regard. And manifest it to all the World, that you have so, by your conscientious and due Attendance upon it.

But some among us, it may be there are, who are not pleased I should insist so much upon this Point; and love not to be call'd upon so often to the same purpose. Who (might they but speak their Thoughts) are ready to say

Obj. What ado do you keep about our loving the Church! and our coming to the Church! and our frequenting the Prayers of the Church! and the Sermons preached in the Church! you were better proceed to some other thing: To beat down *Cursing*, *Swearing*, *Lying*, *Stealing*, *Drinking*, *Gaming*, and other Instances of *Debauchery*, too common and frequent every where,

Ans^w. Why! truly this I should be encouraged to do, could I but see you practise this one Duty well first. For why should I proceed to take you forth into another *Lesson* (contrary to all the Rules of Prudence) before I see you have learnt this one more perfectly? Or how can I expect you will observe any other Duty (pretend what you will) when you won't be prevail'd upon to perform this? This, that is so easy, that is so pleasant, that there is hardly any other more so in all our Religion? No, the true Reason of Peoples dislike of this Subject is, because they are not minded to reform and amend

in this matter, which is so plainly obvious to our notice; and they don't care to be continually upbraided with those Faults, which they are so openly guilty of, and so fully resolv'd, not to reclaim. For notwithstanding the earnest Perswasion and Importunity, made use of herein, few or none are brought over to any happy Reformation. And what? Is he either a wise, or a faithful *Physician*, that will throw aside the same *Medicine*, which he knows will effect the Cure, how much soever the Stomach of a wayward or foolish Patient may keck against it? If therefore your *Physician* continues to administer to you the same ungrateful *Dose*, know that the reaſon thereof is in your ſelves: For ſhould he remove his *Applications* before the *Disease* is thoroughly cured, he ſees it will end in your *Deſtruſion*.

However, now you may look on what is ſpoken, but as very ſmall Matters, yet if you belong to the *Election of Grace*, you will come to acknowledge them, very ſerious things; and to wish alſo, you had better minded them before they came to be hid from your Eyes. 'Tis ſerious Advice that of the Apostle, *Gal. 6. 7.* — *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* People are very apt to deceive themſelves and to be deceived, with vain Fancies and Imaginations. O! they think, 'tis not ſo hainous a thing to negleſt God's *Sanctuary*, as ſome would make it; to be absent from *Church, Sundays*; to negleſt the *Publick Worship*: This they imagine, is but a ſmall Sin, a *Peccadillo*; not worth a taking notice of. Hence they run into it, and continue in it, without the leaſt Shame or Concern: Thus do they ſuffer themſelves to be deceived, with vain Imaginations upon this Account.

But confider what the *Apoſtle* ſays, *God won't be mocked*: You may mock Man (tho' you ought to confider whether your mocking of Man, if he be the *Man of God*, be not a mocking of God alſo; according to that of our *Saviour*, *He that despifeſt you despifeſt me, Luk. 10. 16.*) but 'tis to no purpose, to think of mocking God; God won't be mocked.

And that you may ſee, 'tis no ſuch light matter for any one preſump-
tuouſly to prophan and despife God's Day, look into the 15. Chapter
of *Numb.* and the 32. v. and there you will find he himſelf ſentenced
one to Death, but for picking of a few Sticks upon it. *When they*
found a Man ('tis ſaid) *gathering of sticks upon the Sabbath-day, they*
brought him to Moses and Aaron, and all the Congregation; and they
put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to
him. Upon this they appeal'd to Almighty God, to know his Di-
vine Pleaſure in the Matter. Well! and how doth God award it?
What! that he ſhould be ſtock'd, or whipp'd, or continued in Ward?
No, worse than all this, *The Lord ſaid, the Man ſhall surely be put*

to Death. What! may some say, But for gathering a few Sticks? They might be his own: Or it might have been as lawful for him to have pick'd them in the *Wilderness*, as for any other body: And must the poor Man die for this? Yes; you see 'twas the Sentence of God himself, that he must die.

Tho' I am not pressing on, to that *legal* and nice Observation of the *Lord's Day* (as some of late times seemed to have done) which was enjoyn'd to the *Jews* in respect of their *Sabbath*, yet the improving of it in the Works, and Offices of Piety, and Charity, especially in a due Attendance on the *Publick Worship and Service of God*, is what is highly incumbent upon Christians. Nor ought we to think, our Blessed Saviour is less offended with Peoples *profaning his Day*, and neglecting his *Publick Ordinances* under the *Gospel*, than God was with the *Jews* under the *Law*. There are signal Examples which God hath shewed (too many and tedious to be now related) upon Places and Persons, who have been guilty in this respect. *He that observeth a day, let him observe it to the Lord*; i. e. as becometh the *Lord's Day*: *Not in riotting or Drunkenness; not in chambering or Wantonness; not in strife or envying*; but in the due frequenting of the *Ordinances* of the *Gospel*, celebrated in the *House of God*, to which they belong, in *Publick*; and the cheerful Performance of all the Offices of Charity among their Neighbours; and Piety in their own Families, in *private*; as becometh Christians *. See in the Margent what our Church requires.

* Eccl. In-
junct. 24th of
King Edw. VI.
apud Heyl.
Eccl. Hist. p.

35. *That the Holy-day be wholly given to God, in hearing the Word of God read, and taught, in Private and Publick Prayers, visiting the sick, &c. See Canon 8th, in my Book of Canons.*

Let not any therefore, for the future, think it so small a matter to neglect the *House of God*, especially upon *God's Day*; or to squander away those precious Opportunities and Seasons of Grace, either in Sloth, or Idleness at home; or in wandering the Streets or Fields abroad; or in haunting Ale-houses, and other Places of Debauchery; or in unnecessary visiting of Neighbours in time of Divine Service, to the Hindrance of them also, from the *Publick Worship*, as the manner of too many among us, is to do; as trembling for fear, what the Issue or Event thereof may prove.

But all this while, this is too sad Evidence, and Demonstration, that the *Tabernacles of God*, are not truly Amiable in their Eyes: The *Thinness*, the *Scandalous Thinness* of our *Congregations* every where, is but too sufficient Testimony hereof. Yet this notwithstanding, must not the Ministers of the *Gospel* be allow'd to upbraid People

People with their gross neglect of their Duty? And call upon them to be more faithful and conscientious in the Practice and Observation of it for the future? Should they be silent herein, how might you think the very Stones would be ready to speak?

Let me therefore, earnestly and solemnly renew my *Exhortation* to you all, to esteem the *Tabernacle of God* to be truly lovely: Let it be transcendently Amiable in your sight. Prefer it always in your Hearts and Consciences, above any other Place upon Earth. For then you will be the more easily perswaded to embrace and follow those particular Duties, of great and good Importance relating to it, unto which I proceed to exhort you.

1. *First*, I exhort you to be more careful to keep the House of God decent and lovely. 'Tis an Offence to see a fair Face defiled with Dirt: Or but a curious Picture be spattered with Mire. It must argue a sordid and dirty Disposition in such People, as (like the *Swine*) shall be best pleased in filthy and unclean Places. 'Tis unbecoming the Notion, we ought to take up, of the great God, as if he should be pleased with such. 'Tis true, no material *Filthiness* can any way affect him; any more than a *Bog*, or *Dunghil*, does the *Sun* that shines upon it. Yet we know too he is the God of Purity, and delights to dwell in sanctified and pure places. Which outward Purity also, we ought the more to affect, as *Symbolical*, and expressive of that inward Purity of the Mind; which is most valuable in the sight of God. What was the meaning of those Washings, and Aspersions, and Sprinklings with Water, which God required in his Service among the *Jews*, but to represent that *Purity* wherewith he expected they should approach his *House* and *Presence*? And tho' God be not affected with sensible Filthiness (as I said) yet when he perceives 'tis the Effect of our Irreverence to his Person, or his Service, he justly may. And farther too, as it may give an offence to his People and Servants, to the hindrance or neglect of his Worship.

2. *Secondly*, I would hence exhort you to attend this *Amiable Tabernacle of God*, more timely and early. 'Tis a scandalous thing to observe, how very late many of our People come to Church: Some, not till the end of the *Lessons*; some, not till the end of the *Litany*; and some, not till the end of the *Service*. And can you think such a *Sacrifice* is acceptable with God? that he will be put off with the *blind* and the *lame*? See how he reasons this Matter with his own People, the *Jews*, Mal. i. 13. v. *Ye have said, what a weariness is it to serve the Lord? Ye have brought that which is torn; and the lame, and the sick: thus ye have brought an offering; should I accept of this at your hands saith the Lord?* And at the 8. v. of that Chap. *If ye offer the blind for Sacrifice, saith God, is it not evil? and if ye offer*

offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now to thy Governour; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy Person, saith the Lord of Hosts? Where you see, that God hates and abominates a torn, defective, and imperfect Sacrifice; which may, and ought to be applied to those Christian Services, and Sacrifices, we are to offer up to him also, under the Gospel; that we are to see to it, that they are perfect and intire. Otherwise, we shall make bolder with God, than we would with a Man; than we would with our Governour, or Commander. Whereas we are to know, That God is a great King, and his Name is dreadful among the Heathen. Wherefore cursed be the Deceiver, which bath in his Flock a Male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing, v. 10.

'Tis observable, when Samnel offer'd a Burnt Offering wholly unto the Lord, the Lord heard him, 1 Sam. 7. 9. And David tells us, That God will be pleased with the Sacrifices of Righteousness, *with Burnt-offering, and whole Burnt-offering*, Ps. 51. 19. As this may relate to the Intireness of the Heart in God's Service, so likewise to this, that the Service we offer and pay to God, *be intire*. Otherwise it is a plain Demonstration, that it is not hearty; that it is not perform'd as it should be, *with all the heart*.

'Tis a great and dangerous Errour, as well as a profane Practice, most People are guilty of, who think that so long as they go to Church, 'tis well enough; not regarding what time they come in. And this is the occasion, that can so contentedly, *without Shame, or blushing*, come into the House and Presence of God, tho' it be ever so late first.

Do you think Almighty God does not take notice of this? Can you imagine this can be pleasing in his Eyes? Will he be thus put off with a part of his Worship, unto whom the whole is due? No, you may take this for an undoubted Truth, and I beseech you observe it, *That when thro' Laziness, or Negligence, or Profaneness, you wilfully omit, any the least part of his whole Worship and Service, that he will accept of none of it; all you do afterward is of no value with him; your Performance of some part won't attone for your wilful neglect of the rest*. Be sure then to come at the Beginning.

3. Thirdly, The Tabernacle of God being so pure and lovely, I exhort you to approach it, with Purity and Holiness: Stain it not, by any sinful Pollution. And you will find great Reason to beware when you consider the Purity of that God, whose House it is, and who is more especially present there; *That he is of purer Eyes than to behold Sin and cannot look on iniquity*, Hab. 1. 13. i. e., not with the least liking, or Approbation of it. How bold are they then, who shall bring it into his House, and there openly hug and embrace it before

before his Eyes ? Remember what *David* says, in this matter, *Holiness becometh thy House, O Lord, for ever*, Ps. 93. 5. This is a Place design'd for holy Purposes ; and there is nothing, but what is Holy, or desires so to be, which should be admitted in there. Our Laws have provided, that none shall bring in *Hawks*, or *Dogs*, or any other *Beasts*, into the Church, to defile it, or hinder the Worship and Service of God there solemnized. This is no place for such *Birds of Prey*, as oppress their Neighbours by Violence ; as the *Hawk* doth the lesser *Birds*. This is no place for such greedy *Dogs*, as are always snarling or biting of one the other. This is no place for such *filthy Swine*, as delight to wallow on in the Mire of their own Intemperance, or Uncleanliness.

There's nothing proves a greater affront to God, and Desecration of his *House*, than to bring Sin into it. He that all over dirty and filthy rusheth into the *Presence Chamber* of Kings, or the *Bed Chamber* of Queens, is not guilty of such audacious Rudeness, as he that presumes to rush into the *Temple of God*, all reeking in his sins.

'Tis the *Consecrated House of God*, remember, that you go to : Beware therefore to avoid whatsoever may defile it ; as minding what the *Apostle* hath spoken to this purpose, *He that defileth the Temple of God, him shall God destroy : For the Temple of God is holy*, 1 Cor. 3. 17. What you are therefore from hence, especially exhorted to, is to approach it with *Holiness* ; to lay aside every weight, and the Sin which doth so easily beset you : Not as *Naturalists* observe, the *Serpent* lays aside her Poison when she goes to drink, with a design to lick it up again at her return ; but so as one that takes a *Surfeit* of any thing ; the very thoughts whereof, makes him loath and detest it ever after.

4. *Fourthly*, The House of God being so Amiable, I would farther exhort you, to frequent it with *Reverence*, and *Humility*. Few there are that do so : They rather rush into the Divine Presence, as the *Horse* rusheth into the battle, not considering whether it may prove for Life or Death *.

There is a certain natural *Majesty* in *Beauty*, that carries an Awe with it ; Brightness and Glory is apt to strike us into Fear and Reverence ; as in the Instance of the *Shepherds* ; *the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the Glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid*, Luk. 2. 9.

We ought to approach this Place with Reverence, for the glorious Majesty of that God, whose it is, and unto whom it belongs. In

[†] Dur. Rat.
Divin. c. 7.

the *Consecration of Churches* heretofore, 'tis said †, the *Bishop* came and knock'd with his *Pastoral Staff* three times at the *Church door*, saying, *Tollite Portas, Princeps venies*

veniet — Lift up your Gates, that the King of Glory may come in. To whom the Deacon from within answers, — *Quis est Princeps ille Gloræ?* Who is the King of Glory? The Bishop replies — *Deus fortis, &c.* in the Words of the Psalmist * ^{* Psal. 24. 8, 9, 10.}

— *The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord — The Lord of Hosts he is the King of Glory:* Upon this the Door is set open, and the Bishop enters in. When God of old enter'd his Temple, 'tis said, *The Glory of the Lord filled the House*, Ezek. 43. 5. Some outward and visible Splendour shone about it: Whereas, though the great God now, is not wont to display his Glory in his House, to the Eyes and Sight of natural Men, yet the righteous have a deep Awe and Reverence, there especially, of the Divine Presence and Majesty upon their Souls. Which whoſo ſeriously confiders, when he comes in there, 'tis enough to make him fear and tremble, *Fear ye not me saith the Lord? Will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the Sand for the bound of the Sea, by a perpetual Decree, that it cannot pass it?* Jer. 5. 22. He that confiders, how ſo raging an Element as the Sea, is bound and fetter'd by ſo feeble a Chain, as the fleeting Sand, can't but tremble at the Apprehenſion of that Majesty that doth ſo restrain it.

The Truth is, that great Boldness, I may ſay Audaciousneſs, with which our People generally come into the *House of God*, ſeems to argue, That they have no Sence, no Awe or Dread at all, of the Divine Majesty (who is there present) upon their Souls. If ſo, they would not go into the *Church*, with that Lightneſs, and Loofneſs, they do, into a *Theatre*, or a *Tavern*. When *Moses* approach'd the *Buſh*, in Mount *Horeb*, that flamed and yet was not burnt; going to ſatisfy himſelf of the Reaſon thereof, he heard a Voice out of the *Buſh*, ſaying, *Draw not nigh hither; put off thy ſhoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground,* Exod. 3. 5. The putting off the *Shooes*, in those *Eastern Countries*, was a Token of Honour and Reſpect; as the putting off the *Hat*, is in ours. And you may obſerve, God himſelf required a peculiar Reverence ſhewn to the place of his more glorious Preſence; for this reaſon, because *That* had made it *holy ground*. This, may we think, was ſomething of the ground of K. Solomon's Advice, where he ſays, *keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God*, Eccl. 5. 1. That is — uſe Reverence, in going into God's House, and demean your ſelves reverently while you are there; be not garuſulous and too full of Words; *use not vain repetitions, as the Heathen do;* for God is in Heaven and thou up-^{† Mat. 6. 7.} on Earth: iherefore let thy words be few, v. 2. And if this be not enough to ſecure the Honour of his *House*, he hath ex-

presly required it, by positive Command, Levit. 19. 30. *Ye shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my Sanctuary, I am the Lord.* Where you see the Reverencing of God's *Sanctuary*, is enforced with the same Authority, as the keeping of his *Sabbaths*. Let no Man therefore, be found to contemn and despise those Publick Buildings, devoted to God's peculiar Worship and Service, as some ignorant *Zealots* among us have done; profaning of them to the vilest uses; and preferring common and scandalous places before them. This instead of Reverencing of them, as God requires, is a down-right despising and contemning of them. As our Learned *Hooker* well observes, 'The end of them being the Publick Worship of God, they are in Consideration Houses of greater Dignity, than any provided for meaner purposes. For which cause, they seem, after a sort, to mourn, says he, as being injured and defrauded of their Right, when places not sanctified as they are, prevent them unnecessarily in that Preheminence and Honour.'

You ought therefore to approach these sacred Places with Reverence — *Ecclesiam ut Cælum adi* — said one of the *Ancients*; approach the *Church*, as you would *Heaven* it self, with Awe and Devotion; behave your selves humbly and awfully in it; be always uncover'd therein, as good Subjects are before the *Chair of State*: But especially in the Celebration of all Divine Offices, as in the Royal Presence.

5. Fifthly, The Lord's Tabernacles being so Amiable, I would exhort you moreover, to a constant Attendance upon them. As our Blessed Saviour advises in respect to Prayer — *Pray always*, and the Apostle in respect to Hearing — *Be swift to Hear* — So, take all Opportunities, put into your hands, for the Publick Discharge of those Duties duly celebrated in God's House.

Be sure to take all occasions God vouchsafes you of attending upon them there: And that both in the *Mornings* and *Evenings* constantly; according to the Practice of God's People of old (who had always their *Morning* and *Evening Sacrifice*) and the Laws and Canons of our Church at present. And thus upon K. Solomon's Argument, for a continued Charity — *In the Morning sow thy seed, and in the Evening with-hold not thy hand.* Why? for what Reason? for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that; or whether they both, shall be alike good, Eccl. 11. 6. So you know not, whether will prove most Beneficial, to the promoting your Eternal Interest, your *Morning* or *Evening* Attendance; or whether both may not be equally advantagious.

People,

People, we see, generally will neglect no season or opportunity for going to a *Market* †, or *Fair*, or the like. And being ask'd, why they can't as duely come to *Church* upon the *Lord's Day*, they are ready to answer, Oh! we have *Business* at *Market*; necessary *Business*,

that must needs be done. As if they had no business at *Church*; or as if *that* were so slight a matter, that 'twere indifferent whether it were done or no. A dreadful thought! and yet too true: But when our People come to have so much Love for their Souls as they have for their Bodies, and so much regard for Heaven as they have for the Earth, they will be of another mind, and not before. Then they will see, 'tis as necessary to go to *Church*, as to *Market*, and much more: Then they will acknowledge, that the *Bread of Life*, ought (at least) to be as carefully sought after as the *bread that perisheth*. Let not any therefore, think it enough to come only sometimes; once a Day, or once a Month; but as a healthy Man, hath a constant Appetite to his Food, at the return of the due seasons of *Eating*, so should you have a constant Appetite to the Word, at the return of all due Seasons of *Hearing*.

Lastly, Sith God's Tabernacles are so Amiable, as I have already exhorted you to have due respect unto them all in general, so would I especially perswade you, to have peculiar regard to that unto which you do more particularly belong: And manifest it always, by your Paying (when at home) your constant Attendance, on God's Publick Ordinances there administred, before, and above, any other Place. And that, among others, for this Reason, because your Lawful Minister, duely authoriz'd thereunto, doth take upon himself the particular Charge and Cure of your Soul. This is agreeable to that of the Apostle (which hath no little weight in it duely understood) *Heb. 13. 17.* *Obey them, that have the rule over you: and submit your selves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.* Let us briefly examine these words, and we shall find several things, worthy our Observation, in them; which confirm the Point in hand. That by those Rulers here, are meant the *Bishops* and *Pastors* of the *Church*, and not secular Powers, is plain, in that they are said, *To watch for your Souls*. And so much Beza himself acknowledges on the place * — *Parendum Pastorum & Presbyterorum monitis, &c.* That those *Bishops*, *Pastors*, or *Presbyters*, may have some particular *Flock*, over which to Rule, this is plain also. And that *this Flock* ought to yield particular Obedience and Subjection to those *Bishops*, or *Pastors*, or *Presbyters*,

+ These Instances were made as most suitable to the Country People, to whom this Discourse for the most part was Preached.

Presbyters, or all which are over them, is as plain, as any of the rest. The great matter in Controversy is, from whence those *Pastors* of the *Church*, derive their *Authority*; or their *Ruling Power*? Not from the *People*: For we don't find, in all the *Scripture*, that they had, or pretended to have, any right to confer such *Power*. Nor yet from themselves, as the manner of some *Teachers* is, and hath been in this last Age of the *Church*; in assuming a Right, and *Power*, without any outward Call, of *preaching the Word*, *administiring the Holy Sacraments*, and the like: These are they who *run before they are sent*. But we derive it from God, as the *Apostle* here intimates — *as they that must give account* — To whom they must give account, from him they receive their *Authority*: And who that is, doth need no *Explication*. Or if it should, that of the *Apostle* makes it plain enough; *Take heed unto your selves, and to all the flock over which, the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers or Bishops*, as the *Word* imports, *Act. 20. 28.*

Q. But some may ask, how they, who are the true *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, do derive this *Ruling Power* over their *Flocks* from God?

A. I answer, Not now by immediate *Inspiration* from Christ, as did the *Apostles*; *He breathed on them, saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost*, Joh. 20. 22. but by *Episcopal Ordination*; or as the *Apostle* speaks, *by the laying on the hands of the Presbytery*. Which is not to be understood, of meer *Presbyters*, but of a *Bishop* and *Presbyters*, according to the *Practice* of the *Church of Christ*, for 1500 Years together.

Whereby you see, what reason you have to keep home, to your own *Parochial Churches*, whose *Ministers* alone among us generally are *Episcopally ordained*, and so ought to be look'd upon, as the true *Pastors* of the *Flock*, and *Teachers* of the *Gospel of Christ*, in *England*.

Besides, you have this farther reason to frequent your own *Parish-Assemblies*, in that the places of your *Worship* are alike solemnly *Consecrated* and *Dedicated to God*; that your *Ministers* have the same *Authentick Call* and *Ordination* with any others; that you have the very same *Liturgy*, *Rites*, and *Ceremonies*; the same *Prayers*, *Word*, and *Sacraments*. What then is it, should cause our *People* thus to stray and wander as they do? What must it be but *Novelty*, *Curiosity*, or a *Design* to keep up a groundless Separation among us.

Obj. But what? May some say, Are all *Ministers* *Gifts* and *Parts* alike? Mayn't we then be allow'd to follow the *Best*, and go where we may *Edifie* most?

Answ.

Asw. For Answer, No: All Ministers Abilities and Accomplish-
ments are not equal and alike; we may say with the
Apostle *, *There are diversities of Gifts, but 'tis the same Spirit; and there are differences of Administrations, but the same Lord; And there are Diversities of Operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.* *Cor.12.4,5.

But this Objection consisting of two Parts, I shall, with God's Permission, speak briefly to them both. 1st, *Of attending the Best.* 2dly, *Of attending where we can edifie most,* I shall consider First,

1. How far People are obliged to Attend the *Best*. One would willing embrace the *Best*, and I should not discourage it, where it may lawfully be had. But then

1. Who can tell who is absolutely the *Best*? the *Best* in himself? and the *Best* for them? Some may be *Best* in one respect, and some *Best* in another. Some may be *Best* for *Doctrine*, others for *Application*. Some may be *Best* for *Preaching*, others for *Praying*. Some may be *Best* for their *Judgment*, others for their *Elocution*: No one is absolutely best for all. So true is the Expression of the Poet,

— *Non omnia possumus omnes.*

Every one can't do all things alike. People therefore not knowing, when they are *Best*, ought to be contented when they are *well*.

2. To covet absolutely the *Best*, is neither allowable nor practicable in other Matters, why then should it be held necessary in this? Thus we are contented (and we ought so to be) If our *Estate* be not the *Best*; nor our *Habitation* the *Best*; nor our *Titles* the *Best*; nor our *Habit* the *Best*; nor any other thing we have, be the *Best*. We are generally well satisfied, with that Portion God is pleas'd to allot us in these Matters; so ought we to be likewise in the other. If you have, what you may think the *Best*, encourage him in the *Lord's Work*, and *Bless God for him*. If you have not, *labour to be content*; and make the most of him, as a prudent Person does of what he has, in other Matters; as knowing also, That the *Gospel* he *Preaches*, is the same with the *Best*; the *Prayers* and *Sacraments* he administers, the same with the *Best*. And if he brings less Abilities, do you bring the more *Zeal*, *Devotion*, and *Attention*; and then all will be as well, as if you had the *Best*. But then

3. When People shall attend only on those; which in humane Appearance may be held the *Best*, This seems a neglect and undervaluing of the *Ordinance*, and the *Blessing* of Almighty God upon it. The Blessing of God is not confined to the Parts, Learning, or Ability of the *Best* and *most eloquent Preacher* in the World: And 'tis observable

vable, where is most of *Man* seen, there is least of *God*. But his Blessing is wont to attend his own *holy Ordinances*; which if accompanied with that, the meanest of his Servants shall prove the Instruments of your Consolation and Salvation: Without which, *Paul* may plant, and *Apollos* water to no purpose. Let not any therefore, *Despise the day of small things; not one of these little ones*, as they may be accounted, so long as they are the true *Messengers* and *Ministers* of *Christ*; tho' their Gifts or Parts may not be so eminent as some others are. 'Tis the same Advice that St. *Paul* gives the *Corinthians*, in respect to young *Timothy*, *Let no man despise him: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do*, 1 Cor. 16. 10, 11. So much for the 1st.

2. To proceed to that other Branch of the *Objection*, of Peoples going where they can *Edifie Best*. This is a plausible and popular Pretence; though God forbid I should hereby be thought ever to discourage *true Edifying*. No, that is what I do, and ought to endeavour to promote to my utmost Power and Capacity.

But then, many there are who make use of this, as a *Pretext* for *Separation*. I utterly deny, that any can meet truer, or better Helps to Edification (if they are not wanting to themselves) generally than in the *Way* and *Constitution* of the *Established Church of England*, and what they may meet with by God's Blessing (if they come thither as they ought) in their own *Parochial Congregations*. So that *Edification* is most in *Pretence* among some People, and least in *Execution*. For whatever they say, that is not the true Reason of their forsaking the *Parochial Assemblies*, unto which they belong: As we may see from hence, that generally after their long Separation from us, they are no more *Edified* than others be; than they themselves were before.

From all which, I am bold once more, to renew and re-inforce my *Exhortation* to you, *That you would constantly attend the Worship and Service of God, in your own Parish Churches*. Let that *Tabernacle* of God, to which you belong, be most lovely and amiable in your Eyes. So long as the *Word* of God is there *purely* and *constantly preached*, the *Prayers* and *Sacraments* rightly *administer'd*, according to the *Order* and *Establishment* of the *Reformed Church of England*, I advise, I perswade, and in God's Name, I require you all, never to leave it nor forsake it.

Now for your better Performance of this weighty Duty, I shall lay before you, some serious Considerations, as *Motives* to engage you to it; and some few *Directions* to assist you in it, and then *conclude* the Subject.

1. For the Motives hereunto: They arise from these following Reflections.

1. Motive, The First is this, A serious Consideration, whose Tabernacle it is, the Lord of Hosts? This we might think, were enough to endear it to us, and render it truly Amiable in our Eyes. For whatever belongs to God, ought to be dear to Man; but especially to Christians. To Man as created after his own Image: To Christians, as Redeemed with his own Blood. To illustrate this by a Familiar Example; for one who depends on the Court, who has all his Bread from thence, to scorn, slight, and maliciously to despise the Royal Palace of his Sovereign, wherein his Majesty dwells, and takes a peculiar Delight, must needs be interpreted as a very high Affront. Which way can Man, who depends upon the Divine Bounty and Providence, for all he is, for all he has, affront Almighty God more, than by neglecting of his House, the place he most delights in, of any other upon Earth?

They who truly love God, and delight in him, must love what he loves, and delight in what he delights. If they act contrary hereunto, they are rather to be accounted Traytors, than true Subjects; Enemies and not Friends, Then are ye my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you, saith our Blessed Saviour, Joh. 15. 14. Twas a true Character of Friendship, given by Catalin to his ^{+ Salust de Bel. Cat.} Conspirators †, when he said — Idem velle, atq; idem nolle, ea demum firma est Amicitia — That is Friendship to like, and to loath the same thing.

Let this Consideration move you; love the Houses and Tabernacles of God, for God's sake; because they are his, and do peculiarly belong to him. No good Subject would deface, or demolish, or neglect, the Palace of his King; but rather honour and esteem it for his Sovereign's sake.

2. Motive, Another Motive to engage you to delight in God's Tabernacles, and esteem them truly Amiable, is the Consideration of the end and design for which they are made. They are wholly and solely intended, to these two weighty Purposes.

1. For the Advancement of God's Glory.

2. For the promoting Man's Salvation.

1. The chief Design of Churches, and consecrated Places, is for the better Advancement of God's Glory. They are separated from all other Uses, and set apart as peculiar Places, where the People of God may unanimously meet together, to glorify and praise his holy Name. Thus Moses foretelling of the Temples, after he had required the Israelites to destroy all those Places, wherein the Nations served their Gods, faith unto them, ' Ye shall not do so unto the

Lord.

' Lord your God ; but unto the place that the Lord your God shall
 ' chuse to put his Name there, thither shall you come, and bring all
 ' that I command you, your Burnt Offerings and Sacrifices, &c. And
 ' ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God, ye and your Sons, and
 ' your Daughters, your Men-servants and your Maid-servants, &c.
 ' Deut. 12. at the beginning of the Chap.

Where you see how unanimous and cheerful God would have his People be, in their assembling together, for the Advancement of his Honour and Glory ; *their Sons, and their Daughters, their Men-servants and their Maid-servants*, even the whole Family, were to repair carefully to *God's House*, for the glorifying of his Name.

The end of all our Actions, whether Natural or Religious, the Apostle tells us, must be *the Glory of God*; whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do (saith he) * *do all to the Glory of God*.

* 1Cor. 10.31. We find God hath denounced a Curse upon those, who will not promote the glorifying of his Name ; as in the

2 Mal. 2. *If ye will not hear, if ye will not lay it to heart, to give Glory to my Name, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will even send a Curse upon you, and curse your Blessings : Yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay them to heart.* Where you see, who are cursed—*they that will not hear ; they that will not lay it to heart, to give Glory to the Name of God.* (and how far they do so, who neglect the House of God, you may easily judge). What of them? God will curse them ; *he will curse their Blessings* ; nay, *they are cursed already*. Can we wonder if the Curse of God be upon our Persons, or our Families : Upon the Church, or Nation ; when People can so generally neglect his House, the Place appointed to give Glory to his Name?

As they are Places then, appointed and set apart for the promoting and carrying on the Glory of God, (the great end of our Creation) they ought to be Amiable in the Eyes and Sight of all Christian People.

2. So they ought to be also, in the second Place, as they are appointed for the better promoting of our own *Salvation*, i. e. for the Discharge of those *Publick Duties* of Religion therein, which are needful to that great end. For it hath pleased Almighty God, in his infinite Wisdom, to ordain, that Life and Salvation shall ordinarily be found, only in the use of his own appointed Means, laid down in the Gospel ; such as *Prayers, Sermons, Sacraments*, and the like, perform'd in a pious, serious, charitable manner.

Now our *Publick Churches* are appointed for the better solemnizing of those gracious and holy *Institutions* of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And they are most commodious to this purpose ; as they

they are publick places; known to every one; and free for all Christians to repair unto; without any check or controul (as may happen in private Hous-es) for the discharge of the weighty Offices of Religion, in order to their own Salvation.

For although Almighty God does all for his own Glory primarily, and chiefly, yet is he pleased to direct all our solemn and Religious Performances, to our own Eternal Comfort and Salvation likewise. He is not any way better'd, or made more happy, or Glorious, by any thing we do, truly and properly speaking, than he was before; and we may say with Elihu, *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he of thy hand,* Job 35. 7. No; our Wickedness may hurt a Man; and our Righteousness may profit the Son of Man, v. 8. but these things don't really affect Almighty God, so as to make him essentially, either more or less glorious than he was before. They affect our selves; and the avoiding the one Wickedness, and the embracing the other Righteousness, God is pleased to require and command in order to our Salvation.

Now *Salvation* is of that Nature and Importance, in the true Notion of it, that whatever Place, or Person, or other means, be appointed for the effecting and promoting of it, ought to have our particular esteem and regard. *Salvation* implies a State of endless Bliss, of interminable Happiness, of absolute and compleat Felicity; both of Soul and Body, eternally in the Heavens. Which is undoubtedly the highest and most valuable of all Blessings; and most to be esteemed and promoted by us, however it be so fadly and generally neglected. If our People had but true, deep and lively Impressions hereof on their Hearts, there would be nothing found more lovely, and Amiable in their Sight, than what is appointed for the finishing and effecting of it. So much for this Second Motive.

3. Motive, If after *Salvation*, it might be suppos'd, that a Temporal Advantage were of any Impression, a Third Motive should be this, The great Blessings which accrue to those, in whose Eyes God's Tabernacles are Amiable, even here in this *World*. Yet forasmuch as this Consideration hath its weight and Influence on such as are swayed more by *Sence* than *Faith*, and by *present Enjoyments*, more than by *future Expectations*; I may (I hope) profitably enforce it a little. Give me leave therefore to instance in a few of those many Blessings which attend such in the present Life, as love the House of God.

1. They become hereby entitled to *Prosperity* and *Success* in their *Temporal Affairs*. Godliness and Religion, and diligent Attendance upon God's Publick Worship, is not without Promises of a peculiar Blessing, even here below. According to that of the Apostle, *Godliness bath the promise of this Life, as well as that which is to come.*

come *. And if it doth not always produce our Hap-pinefs, as a *Natural*, it entitles us unto it as a *Moral Cause*. For Almighty God hath a peculiar respect towards those, who are upright in his House, and tender of his Honour. *Though a Sinner may do Evil an hundred times, and his Days may be prolong'd, yet surely I know, saith Solomon ||, it shall be well with those which fear God, which fear before him.* There is a peculiar Providence encompassing those round about †, as are zealous in his Worship and Service, tho' they do not see it; as there is a *dreadful Curse* hanging over them, that despise or neglect it, tho' they may not fear any such thing.

What Encouragement we have to respect the House and Ordinances of God in particular, we may infer from that of the *Psalmist* — *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee*, Ps. 122. 6. What was the ground of that passionate Strain of Love, holy David there expresses towards *Jerusalem*? 'Twas because the House of God was there, or to be there, v. 9. *Because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.* They that wish well to *Jerusalem*, where the *Temple* is the true Worship and Service of God is celebrated shall fare the better for it, even in this World. *They shall prosper that love her* — Their temporal Affairs, and Concerns, shall speed much the better for it: They shall thrive and flourish in their Estates, in their Persons, in their Families, abundantly the more upon this account.

We may observe it, and as a particular Judgment (one might think) of God upon them, of some *Worldly People*, that neglect God's House, and profane his Day, and travel up and down hither and thither, in pursuit of their carnal Designs and Projects, hardly *one of them does prosper in the World.* They are poor, indigent, beggarly, as well in Body as in Mind; as well in Goods as in Grace: And how can they look it should be otherwise? Can they expect the Blessing of God upon any thing they do, who slight and neglect his wise and gracious Institutions? Or think the Lord will prosper any thing they have, as despise his Ordinances? No, far from it.

But then see what a special Blessing is promised to those who refrain doing their own Pleasure upon the Sabbath, in the 58. *Isai. 13, 14.* ‘ If thou turn away thy foot from doing thy Pleasure on my Holy-day, and call the Sabbath a Delight, the Holy of the Lord Honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thy own ways, nor finding thine own Pleasure, nor speaking thine own Words, then shalt thou delight thy self in the Lord; and I will cause thee (saith he) to ride upon the high Places of the Earth, and feed thee with the

‘ Heritage

' Heritage of Jacob thy Father ; for the Mouth of the Lord hath
' spoken it.

And for the better Encouragement of his People to attend his Service, it is very remarkable, that he promised the *Israelites* to look after their Concerns at home, while they and their Families went yearly up to his Temple, that neither their Enemies should invade them, nor any Evil befall them in the mean time. Nor can we think our Saviour Christ has less respect to those who attend duly and sincerely on his Worship, under the *Gospel*, than God had to them, who were obliged with their Families, to offer up their Sacrifices once a Year at *Jerusalem* under the *Law*. But then

2dly, This farther yields us here *Peace of Conscience*, the most valuable Blessing in the World. If we love the House of God, and attend it as we ought, 'twill bring us that *Peace*, which as the *World* cannot give, so it cannot take away from us. It will be a great Comfort, and Satisfaction, that we have done our Duty ; that in some gracious measure, we have answer'd the Will and Commands of our Blessed Saviour. When we sin, there's nothing remains of that, but the Sting of Guilt, which sticks fast in the *Conscience* — *Hæret lateri lethalis Arundo* — Whereas, what Offices of Piety and Religion we perform, though with much pain or hazard, the Remembrance thereof brings Delight and Comfort to the Soul ; proves sweeter to it than *Honey* or the *Honey-Comb* ; is dearer to it than *Gold*, or much fine *Gold*.

Now we can hardly propose, to wise and judicious People, an higher or nobler Motive than this is, to engage them to love, esteem, and frequent *God's House*, and *God's Ordinances*, That it will bring a *Man Peace at the last* ; that amidst all the Storms and Tempests that rage without him, he is able to say in the Words of the *Comedian* — *At mihi plundo domi* — All is well inwardly, no Wars, no Jars, no Convulsions are found there. And this, the Testimony of a good Conscience, is better than a thousand Witnesses.

However, they who now neglect and slight the House and Ordinances of God, seem to bear it out merrily and jocundly before Men, they often meet with secret Girds and Objurgations in their own Breasts, in private, which sometimes bring them even to their Wits end ; and they are forced to apply themselves to the *Anodine* of Drink, or Company, or Play, or the like, to drown the noise within. But what will they do at last, when their own Consciences shall be their Accusers, and fly in their Faces ? When they shall be forsaken of themselves and all the World too ? Shant have one Word of Apology or Excuse left, why they shall not be sent quick down into Hell, and plung'd into everlasting Burnings ?

This will prove to be your Condition one Day, without Repentance, who now neglect Reproof, and despise Admonition. However, now you slight the Ordinances of the Gospel, and brave those who advise you to your Duty, yet know a time is coming (and may be nearer than you are aware of) when you shall own and acknowledge, *That one Lord's Day well spent in the House of God, and the Exercises of Religion, the serious remembrance thereof will yield you more true Comfort and Satisfaction, than all that ever you spent in your worldly Affairs, or your most sensual Gratifications.*

[†] Sir John
Mason in Mr.
Lloyd's Fair
Warr.

As an eminent Statesman, some said †, if he were to live again, he would exchange the whole Life he had lived in the Palace, for one Hours Enjoyment of God in the Chapel:

All things else forsake me, I said He, besides my God, my Duty, and my Prayer. So that let this Consideration move you, to love that which is so truly Amiable, that it will bring you the truest Comfort and Satisfaction, you will meet with in all your Life.

4. Motive, A Fourth Motive to engage you to love and delight in God's House is this, That your neglect of it may provoke God, in his Justice, to *shut the doors thereof against you.* He may reward you

in kind, as he did those the Apostle speaks of *; even as

* Rom. 1. 28. *they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, so God gave them over to a mind void of Judgment, to do the things that are not convenient.* You do not love God's House, and God may resolve, *you shall no more frequent it;* you do not now delight in it, and God may purpose, *That you shan't much longer enjoy it.*

Give me leave boldly to tell you this, That our Peoples great Indifference towards Religion, and their neglect of the weighty Institutions thereof, looks like a sad Prognostick, That God may be about to take away from them what they so little value; And for the Reform'd Liturgy, to send them a *Superstitious Service*; for the Holy Sacrament, an *Idolatrous Mass*, and for Sermons twice a Day, only some once a Year; as is the Practice in some Places beyond the Seas. If therefore Popery should ever come, to be again obtruded upon the Nation (which God forbid, though some time or other for our Unfruitfulness it may) I dread to think, in what Shoals People will run out and embrace it. For can we think, that they who now care nothing for Prayers, will suffer any thing rather than go to Mass; that they who now sport at the bowing at the holy Name of Jesus, will undergo any Hardship for not bowing to an Image? They who despise the true Religion, will certainly never make any great Scruple to embrace a false: And they who esteem all alike, will be sure to be of that Profession (if they must be of one) which they think makes

makes most for their secular Advantage, how erroneous or superstitious soever it may be.

Besides, what reason have any to think that God should continue a *Blessing*, which People begin (but too generally) to *despise*? which they don't esteem as any *Blessing* at all? You are now indifferent whether you come to *Church* or no; and God may come to resolve, *That you shan't come if you would*: Now you won't hear the good Word of God; a time may come that you *shan't*. He may, in his Justice, send a *Famine* among you, *not of Bread, nor a thirst for Water, but of hearing the Word of the Lord*. *When you shall wander from Sea to Sea, and from the North even to the East; and shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it*, Amos 8. 11, 12. This may sometime come to be your Case. There is no particular *Church*, if it should *Apostatize* either in *Faith* or *Practice*, that hath any Promise from Christ of a perpetual Continuance. We know those *Seven Famous Afian Churches*, that were sometime so dear to God, as we see in the *Revelation of St. John*, are now all destroyed.

And are not these things able to move you to a due and diligent Attendance upon God's *House* and *Sanctuary*, whilst he is pleased to continue them? Remember that of our *Joh. 12. 35. Saviour †, with which I shall conclude this *Motive*, *yet a little while and the Light is with you. Walk while ye have the Light, lest Darkness come upon you.*

2. *Secondly*, I proceed to what I farther promised, and that is to lay before you some *Directions* for the facilitating of this Work, and your better Performance of the same. Which I shall distribute into two Ranks;

1. Into *Negative Directions*. And

2. Into *Positive Instructions*.

1. *First*, For the *Negative Directions*; if you would duly love, and esteem the *House* and *Ordinances* of God, there are some things you must not do. As

1. You must not *Doat* too much on the *Amiableness* of this *World*; nor too much admire the *Beauty* of it. I mean the *Enjoyments* of the *World*, which are of various kinds. Unto which many so inordinately addict themselves, that they quite take them off from a Love to God's *House*, and all that belong to it. Such as are

1. *Worldly Pleasures*; *Sports*, *Recreations*, *Pastimes*, *Entertainments*, and *unnecessary Visits*; which many will chuse to make and follow upon the *Lord's Day*, to the hindrance of God's *Publick Worship and Service*. For thus may we perceive them following their several Fancies, some in walking the Streets, some in frequenting Ale-houses,

Ale-houses or Taverns, some in ranging the Fields, and some other-ways: But while they thus give up their minds to these things, no wonder God's House is no more Amiable in their Eyes. But then

2. Some are hinder'd herein, by an inordinate *Love of Wealth and Riches*; they will be *Rich*, they are resolv'd, whatever it may cost: This is wholly in their Aim, their Desire, their Pursuit; and if God's *House* shall stand in their way, in this fence, *they can leap over Churches*. The *World* hangs so heavy upon them, and hugs them so close, all the Week before, that they can't or won't cast it off upon the *Lord's Day*. Hence they contentedly forsake and neglect the *Lord's Tabernacles*, Day after Day; Week after Week; even for many Weeks and Months together.

In somuch that I must acknowledge, that I despair of ever seeing an *happy Reformation* of Peoples coming *so late* and *so seldom* to *Church*, so long as I see them so *Worldly-minded*. For you may take this as an undoubted Truth, *That you can never love the House of God as you ought, so long as you love the World moore than you ought*. If then you would have your Hearts duly affected with the Beauty of God's *House*, take the *Apostles Advice*, *Love not the World, nor the things which are in the World*. That's the first.

2. Secondly, Another Direction is this; If you would be duly affected with the Amiableness of God's *Tabernacles*, you must not too much *indulge the Flesh*: You must not gratifie *Sloth* and *Laziness*. This never effected any *noble Exploit*; nay, 'twill hardly take due care for its own Sustentation: According to the Observation of *Solomon*, *A slothful Man hideth his hand in his Bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again*, Prov. 19. 24. 'Tis no great Labour to put the hand to the Mouth, yet the *Sluggard* will hardly do that.

But in nothing more, do People generally avoid the taking of *Pains*, than in the Concerns of their Souls, and the things of God. When they are call'd upon, to undertake these things, they are like Persons struck with the *Torpedo**, they can hardly move either hand or foot; they have neither hands to *fight the good Fight of Faith*; nor feet to *run the way of God's Commandments*. Or else they cry out with the *slothful Man*, mentioned by *Solomon*, *O there is a Lyon in the way; a Lyon is in the Streets*, Prov. 26. 13. They cry out of Lyons, of great and terrible Dangers, when there are none at all, unless in their own lazy, and drowzy Imaginations — *Mille pericula fingunt ubi nulla sunt* † —

They fancy a thousand Hazards when there are none at all. Where, and in the following Verse, the *Wise Man* gives a

* *Eo quod corpus torpescere faciat; est piscis Marin.*

† *Lav. in Loc.* *Mille pericula fingunt ubi nulla sunt* † —

true Description of a *Sluggard*; as the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his Bed. A Door doth not turn voluntarily, but by Violence and Force; so he unless stir'd and moved, as it were by force, he is as dead and heavy as a *Door*. And when called upon to arise, and mind his Eternal Concerns, he crieth out — *Yet a little Sleep, a little Slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep*, Prov. 6. 9, 10. But what ensueth? See that, at the next v. *So shall thy Poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man*, i.e. violently and irresistably.

Thus many, when call'd upon to arise, and go early and betime, to God's *House* and *Service*, are so holden down by their Sloth and Laziness, that they are not able move. Then a thousand Difficulties and Excuses arise of a suddain, *They are not well, they are weary, they are sleepy*; 'twas late e'er they came home the last night (whereas 'twould have been more for their Credit to have been at home sooner): Or else they find fault with the *Weather*, That 'tis too hot or too cold; tis wet or 'tis windy; or with the way, that 'tis dirty; or frosty and slippery; and so pretend great Danger and great Inconveniences; thus a lazy, slothful Person, is never without Excuses.

Now this is a *Disease* that seizes upon many People, at no time but upon *Sundays*. None of these things are ever complain'd of all the Week; they are no hindrances to their *Worldly Affairs*. As ill as they pretend to be, they are abroad late on the *Saturday*, and early on the *Monday*. The Way and Weather is well enough to go a great deal farther for their Pleasure or their Profit. So 'tis a kind of a *profane sort of Laziness* they are troubled with; a *Spiritual Lethargy*, which is the most dangerous of all other; a Drowsiness and Sleepiness of Soul, which renders them unfit for any Duties of Religion. But as in a *Natural Lethargy*, they who are troubled therewith, often sleep on to Death; so they who are under this *Spiritual Lethargy*, may justly fear they shall sleep on to *Hell*, and never wake, but in Devouring Flames.

If then you would affect the *House* of God as you ought, and esteem it truly *Amiable*, you must not yield to the Inclinations of the Flesh, of *Sloth* or *Laziness*; for then you will never discharge your Duty as you ought, either to God or Man, you must therefore *mortifie your Affections*; and shake off from you this *Spiritual Laziness*, as what is like to prove of most pernicious Consequence: And resolve to arise sooner on the *Lord's Day* (if there be occasion) than at other times. As considering the Work you have to do upon this Day, is of much greater Consequence and Necessity, than any other thing in the World. You toil and labour for a short uncertain temporal Life, which how soon it may be on the Wing you cannot tell:

And

And all the while can neglect Life Eternal. What worse than Childish Folly and Vanity is here?

Remember that of our Blessed Saviour to his drowsy Disciples, *What could you not watch with me one hour?* So, what can't you arise sooner on the Lord's Day, than ordinary, *by one hour?* If People would but do so, I mean they who have necessary Affairs to dispatch at home, before they go they might timely enough adjust them, to be at Church in due Season. But like Lot in Sodom, they are loth to set out; they *linger all they can*, as if they were afraid they should be out of Danger, and into the way of Peace and Safety too soon. If you can't be persuaded unto this, you manifest to all the World, *That you value the House of God, the Ordinances of the Gospel, and your own Soul at a low rate, when all of them are not worth an hours waking, or a Mile or two's walking.*

3. A Third Direction is this, Don't yield to any of the *cunning Suggestions, and Insinuations of the Devil.* You have already heard, what an *Enemy* he is to *God's House*, and what an *Hinderer* of his *Service*; and how much he endeavours to bring unwary Souls, out of a Love to both.

I pray you to consider therefore, when you are at any time tempted to absent your selves from God's *Tabernacles*, and to stay away from his *Worship* upon any carnal or worldly Excuse whatever, that that wicked Suggestion doth come from the *Devil*. He is a *subtle Spirit*, call'd in Scripture *the Old Serpent*, for his *cunning* and long *Experience* in the *World*. He is undoubtedly the best *Physiognomist* that is; best skill'd (beyond any other) in *Faces* and *Inclinations*. He knows the *Tempers* and *Disposition* of *People*, much better than they themselves do; what they are most addicted to, what doth sway them most, and what *Temptations* will soonest prevail: And by these, as by so many *Tools*, he works; and brings about his ends, in hindring the *Service of God*. Like a *cunning Artist*, he hath not the same *Instruments*, to work upon all, but divers: Because he sees all are not of a like *Inclination*, and *Disposition*. He very well knows what will sway one, shall have no Influence upon another: And what one *loaths*, another *likes*. Hence he is wiser than to attempt the prevailing on *People* by *Antipathies*, things opposite and contrary to their *Humours* and *Dispositions*; but by *Sympathies*; such things as are *insinuating*, and *agreeable*. Thus for Example, doth he work, as was partly noted before upon the *slothful*, by presenting Difficulties before them in their way; *That they may take cold; that they may be wet; that they may fall*; or the like: By these Steps, hindring of them from coming *at all*. Then possibly he suggests, *'tis not so late* (when the day is far spent) *they need not make so much haste; the Service*

Service is long, and they may come soon enough. And this is the Method he takes to make them come tardy.

Upon the *Proud* he works after another Method; he makes them believe they are never *Fine* enough. Upon others, he works by their *Sensuality*.

Others again he sees vehemently set upon the *World*; and so he puts them upon the *Lord's Day* to mind their *Business at home*; *drawing up their Accounts, adjusting their Books, &c.* or to mind their *Concerns abroad*; they must *see their Cattle*; they must *look to their Fences*; they must *secure their Corn*, or the like. And the Devil often sends People upon these *Errands*, when they have no need of it. And he knows, he shall soon prevail, because these things best suit their Dispositions and Inclinations.

I remember I have read *, That that *Witty*, as well as *Learned Lord Chancellour, Sir Thomas More*, writeth of a certain Devil, called -- *Negotium — Business*; which he saith, carrieth more to *Hell* than all the Devils besides; the very same which was in them that would not come to the *Feast*, mentioned in the *Gospel*; one being so *Busie* about his *Farm*; another in trying his *new Bargain of Oxen*; a third in his *Observance of his late married Wife*; that by no means they could come to the *Royal Supper*. So many make or pretend *Business*, when they have none; or will adjourn over some little *Business*, (as the *taking Physick*, or the like) unto the *Lord's Day*; to the great neglect of God, and his *House* at once. Insomuch you see there is a great necessity you are under, to beware of the *Suggestions of the Devil*; or you will never love the *House of God*.

2. Having thus dispatch'd these, I proceed to some more *Positive Directions*, what you are actually to perform.

1. Be much in *Meditation and Contemplation*, turn your Eyes inward. The *Beauty of God's Tabernacle* (as I intimated before) is not to be seen so much with the *Eyes of the Body*, as of the *Mind*. *Contemplation* is the Eye of the Soul: By this we see things which are invisible; we discern the Loveliness, even of Spiritual Objects. And this way also, Love often steals into our Hearts. When we give our Thoughts the Liberty to *contemplate* on the *Colour, Parts, Symmetry, and Proportion of the Object*, the result thereof is ordinarily, an ardent Affection. And indeed, how can the *Heart* affect what the *Mind* never thought?

Meditation is undoubtedly a weighty Duty, greatly incumbent on all Christians. Not a worldly, carnal, sensual Consideration (which too many indulge) but *holy, divine Contemplation*; the *Law of God* should be our *Meditation*, as it was David's, all the Day, Psal. 119. 97.

There would very great Advantage accrue to People hereby, both in reforming what's amiss (particularly their unnecessary absenting themselves from the Publick Service of God) and in performing what is good.

The Eye is observ'd to be the Gate of Love, through which it enters, and attacks the Soul: Contemplation is the Exercise of the wise Faculty of the Mind. By this, we may take a silent View of the Glory of God's House, and a small Glimpse of the Beauty of God too. This was the ground of David's longing Desire, to be in the

^{+ Pol. Syn. in} House of the Lord. — *ad Contemplandum* — so the Cri-
tic + To behold the fair Beauty of the Lord, Ps. 27. 4.
Loc.

Not that David could any way discern it, by the bodily Eye; but only this way, by an holy Contemplation: Hence the more he beheld, the more he loved: So shall we also, if we give ourselves Liberty and Leisure seriously to meditate and consider the Excellencies and Advantages of God's House above any other Place; the more we consider them, the more shall we still admire them. But the Misery and Mischief is, People will but seldom employ themselves this way; they don't care to meditate, they won't think, and this often proves fatally dangerous. This, *non putarem*, exposes to many Inconveniences: But in nothing more, nor worse, than in Matters of Eternity. Hundreds, Thousands, Hundreds of Thousands, perish for ever, for want of due Consideration.

What would greatly help you both in discerning of the Beauty, and intirely affecting of God's House, is, to allow your selves some time to set down and contemplate thereon. Which indeed should be the particular Exercise of your thoughts, as soon as you awake, especially *every Lord's Day Morning*: It should be the Exercise of your Minds, at other times also; but this seems to be — *opus diei in die suo* — the proper Work of the Day. Meditate on the place to which you are obliged to go; that 'tis to God's House, which he hath a peculiar Right unto. And farther, what you go thither for; that 'tis to pay that Religious Worship you owe to your great Creator, and most merciful Redeemer; that 'tis to meet God in his Ordinances, as well for your own Eternal Good, as for his Glory. That there are transacted Matters of Eternal Moment, and the great Mysteries of our Salvation are there dispenced: There we may speak to God in Prayer for a gracious Supply of all our want: And there may we hear God, speaking to us, in Preaching Peace and Tranquility to the Soul, of greater Value than all the World.

If Christians did but confine their thoughts to such serious Contemplations as these, this (thro' the Grace of God) would kindle such a Love and Zeal of God's House in 'em, as would even eat them up.

Contemplation

Contemplation sets the Arrow of Love deep into the Liver. Tho' the bodily Eye (as I said) may discern nothing more in God's House, than in another, as to the material part; yet the Eye of the Spirit discerns surpassing Beauty therein, in its spiritual Relation. So that if you would duly attend this Direction as you ought, it will be some way useful, by God's Blessing, towards the enkindling this Divine Flame in your Hearts. That's the first.

2. A Second Direction is this, If you would be duly affected with the Amiability of God's House, you must give your Mind to it. There's nothing can be well done with an unwilling Mind: Nor nothing is too hard for a Mind that is willing. You must therefore bend your Thoughts and Inclinations more this way; not set so coldly and faintly to work, but briskly, and with an unmoveable Resolution. As holy David did in a like case, when he cried out, *Away from me ye wicked: I will keep the Commandments of my God,* Ps. 119. 115. Thus also should you cry out to all Impediments, that put themselves in your way, Away from me; stand off; stand off wicked Thoughts! stand off all sinful Pleasures! stand off deceitful Riches! I am resolv'd *I will keep* (by his Grace) the *Lord's Day* as it ought; I will frequent the devout *Prayers of the Church*; I will attend the *Preaching of the Word*; I will wait on the Administration of the *Lord's Supper*; I will observe the *Ordinances of my God*. Thus should you fully purpose and resolve; and tho' you can't keep them as you ought (which should be your Grief) yet you should keep them as well as you can, and that will be your Joy and Comfort.

If you thus resolve in earnest, what won't Resolution effect? Faintness prevails little, Resolution does all things; bears down all before it, when it comes to this, that it will either die or conquer. Let therefore, nor Height, nor Depth, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor *things present, nor things to come, seperate you from the Love of God's House, and God's Ordinances.* If you give your Mind to it, you may be sure nothing will, nothing can do it.

'Tis true, Love can't be compell'd, it can't be forced, nor can it be purchased for Money. If so, *Crowns and Kingdoms* would go and be pawn'd down, as an easy Bargain for it. But these won't always do; no, if a Man would give all the Riches of his House for Love (says Solomon) it would utterly be contemn'd, Cant. 8. 7. However, tho' Love can't be forced, it may be inclined; it may be perswaded. Importunity, Diligence, and Perseverance, prevail much, and often obtain beyond Hope. Persons have some Power over their own Minds in this Business, and may bring them to love (whether Persons, or Places) better than they do, if they would. The *Mind* lies much, I do not say wholly in the Power of the *Will*, even in Religious

Matters; as they might go *sooner* to the *House of God*, if People would; and *earlier* if they would; and they might behave themselves *more reverently* there, if they would. That Persons are thus negligent in all these things, is owing to no fatal Necessity that compels them; but to a certain Vitiosity of Mind, and Laziness of Body, that enclines them thereto.

If People would, why can't they *love* better, things that are *lovely*? 'Tis a Violence to *Nature*, not to do it: and to *Grace* also, if it be in *Religious Concerns*. The great Occasion is, their too much indulging those corrupt Affections, which they ought to put off. And until they do so, they will neither love nor delight in the things that are good. Let not then the filthy Vapours of the World, blind your Eyes in these Matters; nor their gay Shews bewitch your Sight. But rather boldly break through all, to come to the sweetest Embrace-ments of the Holy Jesus, in his Blessed Ordinances.

But then you may better strengthen your Resolution, by confirming it with *pious Vows*, prudently and soberly made. We see *David* bound himself with *Vows**: And I see no Reason, but a

* Ps. 116. 14. good Christian may do it likewise. But then he must

be very careful; *Not to vow anything rashly; any thing out of his Power to perform, any thing that he doth not intend; or which is not lawful for him to perform.* But in such things as are otherwise his Duty to do, and are within his Power, a Vow prudent-ly made and manag'd, may conduce something to the better promo-ting *God's Worship and Service*. For Example,

If God should give you Life and Health, and other necessary helps thereunto, what if you should *vow*, That you will frequent the Ser-vice of God, in your *Parochial Assemblies*, every *Lord's Day*, as oft as it is there solemniz'd? What if you should *vow*. (unless necessar-ily hindred) that you will *always come to the very beginning of God's Publick Worship*, and continue at it in the devoutest Posture you can, during the whole time of the Celebration? Might not this conduce much to the Honour of *God's House*? And the promoting of his Ser-vice? Undoubtedly it would, i. e. if strictly and carefully kept, and perform'd; otherwise these Vows would prove, but the *Sacrifice of Fools, in which God takes no pleasure*, Eccl. 5. 4. Let such be sure therefore to *pay what they have vowed*.

Now this being in a Matter People might effect, if they please, i. e. *go early and constantly, and devoutly to the House of God*, the Fault as well as the Danger, becomes their own to violate any such *Vow*, if they make it. Which indeed, in effect, is no more than what they have already *vowed in their Baptism*; and every time since, that they have received the *Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*; so that pro-perly,

perly, this would be no new *Vow*, but a Confirmation of the old ; to the strict Observation whereof, every Christian Man and Woman is solemnly bound. If you would duly affect God's Tabernacles encline your *Minds* to it.

3. *Thirdly*, Another *Direction* is this, If you would be duly affected with the *Amiability* of God's *House*, you must *accustom your selves to come to it*, and the *Holy Ordinances* there administred. Acquaintance and Conversation enkindle Love and Friendship : Whereas *Strangeress* and *Coyness* beget loathing and Neglect.

The more you are acquainted with God, and with his *House*, and with his *Statutes*, the more pleasant and Amiable will they still become. 'Tis a great Matter, *Custom*: *Custom is a kind of second Nature* ; and what is Natural is pleasant. This in nothing holds truer, than in the great Duties and Instances of Religion. We observe none, who keep their *Church* better, who *love* the *Institutions* of the *Gospel* more, than they, who from their Youth have been *accustomed* to, and brought up in the *Practice* of these things, as I hinted before.

What is the reason we may observe many so backward in going to *Church*, on *Lord's Days* and *Holy-days*? That care not to go at all ? or at least not until it be very late? 'Tis because they were not so happy, to be inured and accustomed thereunto from their *Youth*; or for a great part of their *Time*. They were never better educated ; and their *ill Education* hangs about them still, and doth so all their Life long : So ill and dangerous a thing is it, for any to be brought up to an *ill habit*, in respect to the *Ordinances* of the *Gospel*, from their tender Years. The *Prophet* represents it a *Difficulty* next to an *Impossibility*, for one to change an *Evil Custom*, in that apt Similitude of the *Ethiopian* and the *Leopard*. *Can the Ethiopian (saith he) change his Skin? or the Leopard his Spots? Then may ye which are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well*, Jer. 13. 23.

'Tis a difficult Matter for one that is *accustomed* to do Evil, to leave off doing of Evil ; and 'tis no easy Matter, for one who is *accustomed* to do well, not to do well. 'Tis a hard matter to bring one not accustomed to it, to go *constantly* to *Church* ; and 'tis no easy matter, to perswade one that is to stay *away* from the *Church*. The one finds no pleasure in going thither, the other none in staying at home, the one is grieved to go, and the other is grieved to be kept back. Whence was it, that *Holy David* did so greatly *long* to be in the *Courts* of the *Lord's House*? to enjoy the Gracious Presence of Almighty God there? *Long*, even as the chased *Hart* after the *Water-Brooks*? Whence was it, he so envied the *Swallow* and the *Sparrow* their *Habitation*, so near the *Altar of God*? What! did this *Pang* of Devotion to God and his *House*, seize on him all of a sudden? No

'twas because he had long accustomed himself herein, he had made it his daily Practice of a long time.

If then you would delight in the *Amiableness* of God's *House*, you must attend it *frequently, early, constantly*, until you have brought your selves to a *Custom* and a *Habit* in it. An *Habit* is not gotten by a few but by many *Act*s; and a *Custom* grows up from a long continued Practice. If you would bring your selves to a *Custom* in this matter, you must not think to attain it by attending on the *Lord's House* only some times, but *constantly*; not only now and then, but *steadily*; not only for a few *Sundays*, but for many *Years*; yea, if possible, even from your *Youth* up. For if People do not begin it in their *Youth*, 'twill be a hard matter to bring themselves on to it, in their *old Years*.

You therefore, who are in your *Youth*, that have this Advantage before you, lay hold of it; and be perswaded to come to *Church* constantly, to come *every Lord's Day both parts* thereof, and to come at the *very beginning* of God's *Service*. Use your selves to this Practice constantly, without Intermission; and this will bring you into a Love of God's *House*, and the *Amiableness* of it, even in your *Old Age*. According to that of *Solomon*, *Train up a Child in the way he shall go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, Prov. 22. 6.

And you likewise, who have the *Government* of *Youth* committed to your *Care*, your own or others Children, whether *Sons* or *Daughters*, or *Apprentices* or *Servants*, be sure that you *accustom* them to God's *Service* from their *Youth*, and then they won't recede from it in their *Age*. Then will they also bleſs God for you, That he was pleased to give them such pious *Parents*, such Religious *Masters* and *Mistresses*, such good and faithful *Tutors* and *Governours*. Then will they say, *I learned to be Holy and Religious betimes, from my good Father or Mother, from my pious Master or Mistress; they were constant, they were early at God's House, and they were careful to bring me thither with them, to my great Comfort now, O God be praised! God be blessed for them.*

Which indeed should prove an Encouragement to *Heads of Families*, and other *Governours of Youth*, to discharge their Duty herein from the Good and Satisfaction it administers: And because the neglect thereof is likely to prove to themselves and others, so very dangerous and dreadful.

Now the better to *accustom* your selves, to these things, you may do well to observe and imitate the *Example* and *Practice* of good People herein. Many are ready to follow any new *Fashion*, which they see others use, how *costly* or *Antick* soever. But if they see any, who are *Exemplary for Religion*, whose *fashion* it is, to keep to their *Parish Church*, and to come *early to God's Worship*, they take no care to follow

follow them in that. Whereas, says the *Apostle*, Who will harm you if ye are Followers of that which is good? 1 Pet. 3. 13.

So that there is hardly any *Direction* more useful and effectual than this, by the Grace of God, to bring you over to an intire Love of his Tabernacles, your accustoming your selves to a due and constant Attendance upon them. For what seemed hard and difficult at first, *Custom* makes easy; and what was sharp and sowre, *Custom* makes pleasant.

Lastly, I have only one *Direction* more to add to the former, and that is this — Apply your selves to diligent Prayer herein. Pray, that God would open your eyes, that you may see the wondrous things of his Law, the wondrous Beauty of his House.

Would you know what the reason is you are so little affected with the *House of God*, and the *Ordinances of the Gospel* (so transcendently lovely in themselves) 'Tis much for want of *Prayer*:

Ye have not, saith St. James *, because ye ask not. 'Tis *C. 4. v. 2. because People set out in their own Strength, and don't mind God, from whom every good Gift, and every perfect Gift, cometh. If you would that the Word of God, and the Duties of Religion should profit you (what is fear'd few do) you should pray: Pray that God would accompany them with his Blessing, and make them effectual to your *Edification*: Pray that he would be pleased to open your *Hearts* and *Eyes*, as he did sometime the Heart of Lydia, A&t. 16. 14. *Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken by Paul*. She might have heard Paul long enough, even so long as you have done your *Ministers*, and to as little purpose, unless the *Lord* had *opened her heart*, and *the eyes* of her Understanding. What's the reason ye have heard so much, and yet seen so little of the Beauty of God's *House*? 'Tis because the Eyes of your Understanding are darkned, because ye are *Spiritually Blind*, as was hinted before. Who then can open the Eyes of the Blind? None but the *Lord Jesus Christ*. He giveth *Sight* to the *Blind*, and *Light* to them that sit in *Darkness*, and in the *Shadow of Death*, to guide their Feet in the Way of *Peace*.

Would you then, with St. Paul, have the *Scales* fall off your *Eyes*? Would you have that *Ophthalmic*, that Excellent *Eye-Medicine*, that will cure your *Blindness*? It may be yet found, if sought in a due manner: And I will recommend you to the best *Occulift*, and most absolute *Physician* for the *Eyes* that is, one both able and willing; go to God by *Prayer*: You will be welcome to him, without a *Fee*; you may have *Sight* without *Money*, and without *Price*; you may have it for the *asking*. But then you must be † Jam. 4. 3. sure to *ask aright*; ye *ask and receive not*, says the *Apostle* †, because

*because ye ask amiss.** You must *ask* therefore, in and through the alone *Merits* of his Son *Jesus Christ*; you must *ask* in *Faith*, and you must *ask* with *Earnestness* also: You are not to think so great a Blessing, as the recovery of the Sight, is to be easily obtain'd. 'Tis well, if after much serious Labour and Industry, you can be effectual therein, if you may be so happy as to prevail. Prevail you may, if you are not wanting to your selves; and this should encourage you to begin: But prevail you can't expect to, by and by; and that should encourage you to persevere. For you shall be *sure to reap if ye faint not*, Gal. 6. 9.

C O N C L U S I O N.

Thus I have dispatch'd what I have to say, touching this *useful* and *seasonable* Subject. In handling whereof, I have declar'd nothing to you, but (according to my *Conscience* and *Judgment*) the *intire Truth* of God. If it hath not had that due effect upon all, herein more immediate concern'd, I would have with'd (as I find it hath not) yet *Liberavi animam meam*, I have discharg'd my Duty, and the Fault and the Danger are become theirs, upon whom it hath not. That's a dreadful Threat denounced by Solomon, *He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his Neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy*, Prov. 29. v. 1. 'Tis a fearful thing for People to be *Sermon-Proof*, to despise the good Word of God. Yet this, I fear, is the Condition of some among us, who have turned their Backs upon it; and, *with a bold sort of Profaneness*, have therefore neglected their Duty the more, for being thus earnestly perswaded to it. However, I shall pray for them, in the Words of St. Stephen, *Lord, Lay not this sin to their charge*.

What I would therefore farther advise, shall be to the Observation of that of the Prophet *Jeremiah**, ' Give Glory to the Lord

* Jer. 13. 16. ' your God, before he cause Darkness; and before your
17. ' Feet stumble upon the dark Mountains, lest whilst ye

' look for Light, he turn it into the Shadow of Death, and make it
' gross Darkness. But if ye will not hear, my Soul shall weep in
' secret Places for your Pride, and mine Eye shall weep sore, and
' run down with Tears. To which I shall only add, that of our Blef-

fed Saviour†, and conclude: *Now ye know these things,*

† Joh. 13. 17. *happy are ye if ye do them.* Which God, of his Mercy,
grant we all may, through *Jesus Christ our Lord*: To
whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all the Honour, and
all the Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

